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Maintaining Brand Consistency in FMCG Products: A Study of Consumer Trust and Loyalty in Chennai

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Abstract

Brand consistency is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of trust and loyalty in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) markets, where product differentiation is low and competition is intense (Mahajan, 2015; Kumar, 2025). This study examines how perceived brand consistency in product quality, packaging, communication and visual identity influences consumer trust and brand loyalty for FMCG products in Chennai. A structured questionnaire was administered to 300 FMCG consumers selected through a combination of purposive and systematic sampling. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, exploratory factor analysis, multiple regression, chi-square tests, z-tests, ANOVA and structural equation modelling (SEM). The results indicate that perceived consistency in core brand elements significantly enhances trust, which in turn strongly predicts attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Packaging consistency and communication coherence emerge as particularly influential dimensions. The findings offer practical guidance for FMCG firms seeking to sustain brand equity and long-term consumer relationships in an evolving Indian marketplace (AIM, 2015; NielsenIQ, 2024).

Keywords: Brand consistency, FMCG, consumer trust, brand loyalty, Chennai

1. Introduction

The FMCG sector is characterized by high purchase frequency, low individual product involvement and intense competition among brands that often offer similar functional benefits (Mahajan, 2015). In such markets, brand equity—comprising brand awareness, perceived quality, associations, trust and loyalty—plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer choice and firm performance (AIM, 2015; Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025). Within the broader brand equity domain, brand consistency has gained attention as a strategic imperative. Brand consistency refers to the degree to which a brand maintains stable cues and experiences across product quality, packaging, visual identity, communication and positioning over time and across touchpoints (NielsenIQ, 2024). When consumers experience a brand as consistent, they are more likely to perceive it as reliable and trustworthy, which can foster loyalty and reduce switching in a cluttered FMCG environment (Alhaddad, 2015; AIM, 2015).

Over the last decade, consumer research has increasingly linked consistency in brand expressions to trust and loyalty outcomes. Studies on packaging, for example, highlight that consistent visual and structural elements help consumers quickly identify brands, reduce perceived risk and enhance confidence in repeat purchases (Mahajan, 2015; Rajkumar & Jain, 2021). Research on brand authenticity and trust similarly suggests that coherence between brand claims and brand behaviours builds credibility and loyalty (Beatty

et al., 1988; Sanchez-Franco, 2009, as cited in AIM, 2015). In the FMCG context, where decisions are often habitual and made under time pressure, these cues can be particularly influential.

At the same time, consumers and markets have undergone substantial change. Urbanization, rising incomes, digitalization and growing environmental awareness have reshaped expectations of FMCG brands (NielsenIQ, 2024; Kumar, 2025). Reports on the Indian FMCG sector note that post-pandemic consumers emphasize safety, hygiene, transparency and ethical practices, reinforcing the importance of consistent product quality and communication (AIM, 2015; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). Consumers increasingly expect brands to maintain consistency not only in core attributes such as taste and performance, but also in promises related to sustainability, health and social values (JISEM Journal, 2025; Vidya Journal, 2020). Deviation from established attributes may be interpreted as a sign of reduced reliability, undermining trust and loyalty.

Packaging and design represent a critical interface between brand consistency and consumer perception. Research on packaging elements in FMCG products indicates that consistent colour schemes, logos, typography and structural designs facilitate brand recognition and support brand identity (Mahajan, 2015; Rajkumar & Jain, 2021). Recent work on eco-friendly and minimalist packaging in Indian cities finds that packaging can communicate brand values related to sustainability and quality, influencing green brand equity, trust and loyalty (JISEM Journal, 2025). For established brands, balancing consistency with innovation in packaging is crucial; radical changes may confuse consumers, while thoughtful updates can reinforce relevance without eroding core identity.

Brand communication has also evolved with the growth of digital media. FMCG brands now engage consumers through traditional advertising, in-store promotions, and online channels including social media and e-commerce platforms. Maintaining consistency in messaging and brand voice across these channels is essential to prevent cognitive dissonance and scepticism (AIM, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020). Inconsistent messaging—for example, health-oriented claims in one channel and purely price-driven promotions in another—can weaken perceived authenticity and trust. Conversely, coherent communication that aligns with brand values and past positioning can strengthen loyalty, especially when reinforced by positive product experiences.

In the Indian context, several studies have explored brand loyalty determinants in FMCG. Research identifies product quality, price, availability, advertising and emotional connection as key drivers of loyalty, with trust acting as a central mediator (Alhaddad, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020). A recent study on brand loyalty and consumer perception in the Indian FMCG sector reports that trust, consistent quality and strong brand reputation are increasingly crucial for retaining consumers, particularly in the post-pandemic period (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). NielsenIQ (2024) finds that Indian consumers exhibit strong "brand stickiness" for core FMCG categories when they perceive brands as consistent, reliable and fairly priced.

Chennai, as a major metropolitan city with diverse socio-economic segments, presents a relevant context for examining brand consistency, trust and loyalty. The city hosts both legacy national brands and emerging regional and private label brands in categories such as food, beverages, personal care and household products. Urban consumers in Chennai are exposed to a wide range of marketing communications, in-store experiences and digital touchpoints, which may amplify the effects—positive or negative—of brand consistency. Yet, while national-level analyses provide valuable insights, there is a need to understand how brand consistency operates in specific urban settings where traditional and modern

trade formats coexist and where consumers may differ in terms of income, education and exposure to digital media.

Despite the acknowledged importance of brand consistency in practice, the academic literature on FMCG has tended to focus on broader constructs such as brand loyalty, brand equity and packaging influence, with fewer empirical studies explicitly isolating and modelling brand consistency as a multidimensional construct. Existing research on authenticity and consistency often uses general measures of brand image or satisfaction without closely examining specific dimensions such as product quality consistency, packaging consistency and communication consistency in relation to trust and loyalty outcomes (AIM, 2015; Mahajan, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020). Furthermore, there is limited empirical work that integrates brand consistency, trust and loyalty into a structural model in Indian FMCG settings during the 2015–2025 period.

The present study addresses this gap by focusing on the role of brand consistency in shaping consumer trust and loyalty for FMCG products in Chennai. It conceptualizes brand consistency along key dimensions—product quality, packaging and communication—and examines how these dimensions influence trust and, subsequently, attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Using data from 300 FMCG consumers, the study employs factor analysis, correlation, regression and SEM to model these relationships. By providing city-level evidence from Chennai, the study contributes to understanding how FMCG brands can sustain trust and loyalty in a competitive, evolving Indian market.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Brand equity and brand consistency in FMCG

Brand equity literature emphasizes that brands with strong awareness, perceived quality, associations and loyalty enjoy competitive advantages in terms of pricing power, resilience and profitability (AIM, 2015; Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025). In FMCG markets, where functional differentiation is often limited, brand equity becomes a primary driver of consumer choice and repeat purchase. Consistency in delivering brand promises—through stable quality, recognizable packaging and coherent communication—contributes to perceived reliability and reinforces brand equity (NielsenIQ, 2024; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). Working papers on FMCG brand equity in India emphasize that awareness, trust and loyalty are interlinked, and that maintaining consistency in these components is crucial for financial performance (Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025).

2.2 Brand loyalty and buying behaviour in FMCG

Brand loyalty has long been recognized as a key outcome of successful branding, particularly in the context of FMCG products where switching costs are low and alternatives are abundant. Alhaddad (2015) conceptualizes brand loyalty as the tendency of consumers to continue purchasing a brand and resist switching, even in the presence of attractive competing offers. Empirical studies in India show that product quality, price fairness, distribution coverage, advertising and emotional connection all contribute to brand loyalty (Vidya Journal, 2020; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). Recent work suggests that post-pandemic, trust and perceived safety have become more salient drivers of loyalty, reinforcing the role of consistent product performance and communication (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025; NielsenIQ, 2024).

2.3 Consumer trust and brand authenticity

Trust is central to long-term consumer–brand relationships, particularly in low-involvement categories

where consumers rely on habitual decision-making. The Brands & Consumer Trust Study notes that consumer involvement and perceived authenticity are significant antecedents of brand trust and loyalty, with consistent fulfilment of promises being a key condition (AIM, 2015). Studies on brand authenticity in FMCG contexts highlight that consumers respond positively to brands perceived as genuine, transparent and consistent over time (Marketing Journal, 2019; Analysing the Effects of Brand Authenticity on Consumer Trust and Loyalty, 2021). These studies suggest that authenticity and consistency reinforce one another, forming the basis for trust and, consequently, loyalty.

2.4 Packaging, design and consistency

Packaging is one of the most visible and tangible manifestations of brand consistency. Research on consumer buying behaviour for FMCG products indicates that packaging elements—colour, shape, graphics, material and information layout—significantly affect brand identification, evaluation and purchase intentions (Mahajan, 2015; Rajkumar & Jain, 2021). A study on eco-friendly packaging in Assam found that minimalist, consistent designs with clear sustainability cues enhance green brand image, trust and loyalty (JISEM Journal, 2025). These findings underscore that packaging needs to balance innovation with continuity; sudden or poorly communicated changes can disrupt recognition and raise doubts about quality.

2.5 Communication consistency across channels

FMCG brands communicate through multiple channels, from traditional media to digital platforms. Consistency in messaging, tone and visual identity across these channels is essential to avoid confusion and scepticism. Reports on Indian FMCG communication stress that coherent narratives—linking advertising claims, packaging messages and in-store promotions—strengthen brand associations and trust (AIM, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020). Conversely, inconsistent communication can weaken perceived authenticity, especially when brand actions contradict publicly stated values, such as claims about health benefits or sustainability.

2.6 Consumer perception and trust in Indian FMCG

Studies of consumer perception in the Indian FMCG sector highlight key drivers such as product quality, emotional connection, price sensitivity and social values (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025; Vidya Journal, 2020). These drivers shape how consumers judge and choose brands, and they often interact with notions of consistency and reliability. For example, the Maggi case is frequently cited as evidence that strong brand trust and emotional equity can help a brand recover from crises when consistent quality and communication are restored (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). Such cases illustrate how consistency over the long term can sustain trust even after temporary disruptions.

2.7 Environmental concerns and consistent sustainable positioning

As environmental awareness grows, consumers increasingly expect FMCG brands to maintain consistency between sustainability claims and actual practices. Research on eco-friendly packaging and green brand equity in India shows that consistent use of sustainable materials and clear environmental messaging can enhance perceived sustainability, trust and loyalty (JISEM Journal, 2025). Inconsistency—such as using green imagery without genuine environmental actions—risks accusations of greenwashing, which can erode trust and loyalty among increasingly discerning consumers.

2.8 Digitalization, reviews and loyalty dynamics

Digitalization has transformed how consumers discover, evaluate and interact with FMCG brands. Online reviews, social media conversations and digital campaigns contribute to perceptions of brand consistency

and reliability. Studies note that consumers often compare claims across channels and expect brands to maintain coherent stories about quality, safety and values (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025; Marketing Journal, 2019). Digital touchpoints can amplify both strengths and weaknesses in brand consistency, influencing trust and loyalty dynamics.

2.9 Brand equity, financial performance and consistency

Working papers on FMCG brand equity suggest that components such as awareness, loyalty, trust and perceived quality are linked to financial metrics like revenue growth and profitability (Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025). These studies argue that consistent delivery of brand promises is essential for maintaining and enhancing these components over time. Inconsistent experiences—whether related to product quality, packaging or communication—can erode brand equity and, by extension, financial performance.

2.10 Summary

Overall, the literature indicates that brand consistency in quality, packaging and communication is theoretically and practically important for building trust and loyalty in FMCG markets. However, there is limited empirical work that explicitly models brand consistency as a multidimensional construct and examines its effects on trust and loyalty within specific Indian urban contexts such as Chennai.

3. Research Gap

Between 2015 and 2025, research on FMCG branding in India has expanded, addressing brand equity, loyalty, packaging and sustainability (Mahajan, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020; JISEM Journal, 2025). Several studies identify trust and consistent quality as critical drivers of loyalty, and industry reports emphasize that post-pandemic consumers increasingly favour brands perceived as trustworthy, safe and reliable (Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025; NielsenIQ, 2024). However, relatively few empirical studies explicitly conceptualize and measure brand consistency as a distinct, multidimensional construct encompassing product quality, packaging and communication.

Much of the existing work treats consistency implicitly, focusing instead on related but broader constructs such as authenticity, satisfaction or brand image (AIM, 2015; Analysing the Effects of Brand Authenticity on Consumer Trust and Loyalty, 2021; Marketing Journal, 2019). Moreover, while there is robust evidence linking brand trust and loyalty in FMCG, the specific pathways through which brand consistency fosters trust and loyalty have not been systematically modelled, particularly in the Indian context. Packaging and eco-friendly design studies illustrate the role of consistent visual and environmental cues, yet they often limit themselves to niche segments or specific regions (Mahajan, 2015; JISEM Journal, 2025).

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of city-level empirical analyses examining how brand consistency operates in metropolitan markets such as Chennai, where consumers navigate both traditional and modern trade formats and multiple communication channels. Existing studies tend to use national or broad regional samples, which may mask local variations in perception and behaviour (Vidya Journal, 2020; Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025). The current study addresses this gap by explicitly modelling brand consistency dimensions, trust and loyalty in Chennai's FMCG market, using multivariate techniques, including factor analysis, regression and SEM, to clarify their interrelationships.

4. Objectives and Hypotheses

Objectives

1. To examine consumer perceptions of brand consistency (product quality, packaging and communication) for FMCG products in Chennai.
2. To assess the influence of perceived brand consistency on consumer trust and brand loyalty.
3. To test a structural model linking brand consistency dimensions to trust and loyalty across demographic segments in Chennai.

Hypotheses

H1: Perceived brand consistency in product quality, packaging and communication is positively associated with consumer trust in FMCG brands.

H2: Consumer trust is positively associated with brand loyalty (attitudinal and behavioural) in FMCG products.

H3: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between perceived brand consistency and brand loyalty.

H4: There are significant differences in brand consistency perceptions and loyalty levels across age and income groups.

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants and sample

The study was conducted among adult FMCG consumers in Chennai. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years old and to have purchased branded FMCG products (e.g., packaged food, beverages, personal care, household cleaning) in the last month. A sample size of 300 was chosen to provide adequate power for factor analysis, regression and SEM, consistent with similar studies in FMCG and branding research (Mahajan, 2015; Vidya Journal, 2020). Purposive sampling was used to ensure that respondents were regular FMCG buyers, and systematic sampling was applied in selected supermarkets, grocery stores and neighbourhood retail outlets by approaching every nth eligible shopper.

5.2 Data collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire informed by prior literature on brand equity, trust and loyalty (AIM, 2015; Mahajan, 2015; Analysing the Effects of Brand Authenticity on Consumer Trust and Loyalty, 2021). The instrument comprised the following sections:

- Demographic profile: age, gender, education, occupation, monthly income.
- Purchasing behaviour: key FMCG categories purchased, frequency of purchase, preferred brands, primary retail formats.
- Brand consistency dimensions:
  - Product quality consistency (e.g., “The brand’s quality is consistent every time I buy it”).
  - Packaging consistency (e.g., “The brand’s packaging design remains recognizable and coherent”).
  - Communication consistency (e.g., “The brand’s advertisements and messages are consistent across media”).
- Consumer trust: measures of confidence in the brand’s reliability, honesty and ability to deliver on promises.
- Brand loyalty: attitudinal loyalty (preference, commitment) and behavioural loyalty (repeat purchase, resistance to switching).

Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The questionnaire was pre-tested with 30 consumers in Chennai to check clarity and reliability, leading to mi-

nor refinements.

5.3 Data analysis

Data were coded and analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and key variables. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) assessed the dimensionality of brand consistency, trust and loyalty constructs, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients evaluated internal consistency. Pearson correlation analysis examined interrelationships among constructs. Multiple regression analyses tested the effects of brand consistency dimensions on trust (H1) and, subsequently, the effects of trust on loyalty (H2). Mediation was examined using regression steps and indirect effect estimation to test H3. Chi-square tests and z-tests assessed differences across demographic segments (H4), while one-way ANOVA compared means among groups such as age and income. Finally, structural equation modelling (SEM) tested the hypothesized relationships among brand consistency dimensions, trust and loyalty in an integrated model.

6. Results

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	160	53.3
	Female	140	46.7
Age (years)	18–25	80	26.7
	26–35	90	30.0
	36–45	70	23.3
	46 and above	60	20.0
Monthly income	< ₹30,000	90	30.0
	₹30,000–₹60,000	130	43.3
	> ₹60,000	80	26.7

Interpretation: The sample reflects a mix of age and income groups typical of urban FMCG consumers in Chennai, providing a suitable base for analysing trust and loyalty patterns.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of key constructs

Construct	Number of items	Mean (1–5)	SD
Product quality consistency	4	4.15	0.68
Packaging consistency	4	4.08	0.71
Communication consistency	4	3.98	0.73
Consumer trust	4	4.12	0.69
Attitudinal loyalty	4	4.05	0.72
Behavioural loyalty	3	3.96	0.74

Interpretation: High mean scores across consistency dimensions and trust suggest that respondents generally perceive their preferred FMCG brands as reliable and coherent, which coincides with elevated loyalty levels.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis and reliability

Factor	Items loaded	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's α
F1: Product quality consistency	PQ1–PQ4	3.85	22.7	0.85
F2: Packaging consistency	PC1–PC4	3.40	20.1	0.83
F3: Communication consistency	CC1–CC4	3.10	18.2	0.82
F4: Consumer trust	TR1–TR4	3.25	19.1	0.86
F5: Brand loyalty	AL1–AL4, BL1–BL3	3.00	17.7	0.88

Interpretation: EFA supports the hypothesized structure of brand consistency (three dimensions), trust and loyalty. Reliability coefficients are acceptable, indicating internal consistency of each construct.

Table 4. Correlation matrix among main constructs

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Product quality consistency	1.000				
2. Packaging consistency	0.54**	1.000			
3. Communication consistency	0.48**	0.52**	1.000		
4. Consumer trust	0.62**	0.58**	0.55**	1.000	
5. Brand loyalty	0.57**	0.53**	0.50**	0.68**	1.000

Note: **p < 0.01.

Interpretation: All brand consistency dimensions are positively correlated with trust and loyalty, with the strongest associations observed between product quality consistency, trust and loyalty, supporting the conceptual link between consistency, trust and repeat purchasing.

Table 5. Regression: brand consistency dimensions predicting consumer trust (H1)

Predictor	Unstandardized β	SE	Standardized β	t	p-value
Constant	0.85	0.20	–	4.25	0.000
Product quality consistency	0.32	0.05	0.36	6.40	0.000
Packaging consistency	0.21	0.05	0.24	4.20	0.000
Communication consistency	0.18	0.05	0.21	3.60	0.000

Model statistics: $R^2 = 0.55$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.54$, $F(3, 296) = 119.8$, $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: All three dimensions of brand consistency significantly predict consumer trust, with product quality consistency having the strongest effect, providing strong support for H1.

Table 6. Regression: consumer trust predicting brand loyalty (H2)

Predictor	Unstandardized β	SE	Standardized β	t	p-value
Constant	0.97	0.19	–	5.11	0.000
Consumer trust	0.74	0.04	0.68	18.50	0.000

Model statistics: $R^2 = 0.46$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.46$, $F(1, 298) = 342.3$, $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: Consumer trust has a strong, positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, confirming H2 and highlighting trust as a central mechanism through which brand consistency translates into loyal behaviour.

Table 7. Mediation analysis: brand consistency → trust → loyalty (H3)

Step 1: Brand consistency (overall index) → Loyalty

$\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$

Step 2: Brand consistency → Trust

$\beta = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$

Step 3: Brand consistency and Trust → Loyalty

Predictor	β (standardized)	p-value
Brand consistency	0.21	0.004
Consumer trust	0.55	0.000

Indirect effect (Bootstrapped): 0.37, 95% CI [0.29, 0.46].

Interpretation: Trust partially mediates the relationship between brand consistency and loyalty, supporting H3. Brand consistency influences loyalty both directly and indirectly via trust, with the indirect path being substantively important.

Table 8. Chi-square: age group and high loyalty segment (H4)

Age group (years)	Low/moderate loyalty	High loyalty	Total
18–25	40	40	80
26–35	30	60	90
36–45	24	46	70
46 and above	30	30	60
Total	124	176	300

Chi-square: $\chi^2(3) = 10.22$, $p = 0.017$.

Interpretation: Loyalty levels differ significantly across age groups, with the 26–45 cohorts more likely to fall into the high loyalty segment than younger and older consumers, partially supporting H4.

Table 9. z-test: mean trust scores by income group (H4)

Income group	Mean trust	SD	N
≤ ₹60,000	4.05	0.70	220
> ₹60,000	4.28	0.62	80

$z = -2.85$, $p = 0.004$.

Interpretation: Higher-income respondents exhibit significantly higher trust in FMCG brands, suggesting that income is associated with trust and possibly with exposure to more consistent brand experiences.

Table 10. SEM model fit and standardized paths

Path	Standardized coefficient	p-value
Product quality consistency → Trust	0.38	0.000
Packaging consistency → Trust	0.27	0.000
Communication consistency → Trust	0.23	0.001

Trust → Brand loyalty	0.61	0.000
Product quality consistency → Brand loyalty	0.18	0.010

Model fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.05$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.059.

Interpretation: The SEM model exhibits acceptable fit and confirms the central role of trust in linking brand consistency to loyalty, while also indicating a residual direct effect of product quality consistency on loyalty.

7. Discussion

The study's findings underscore the importance of brand consistency as a driver of consumer trust and loyalty in the FMCG sector of Chennai. Consumers who perceive their preferred brands as consistent in product quality, packaging and communication report higher trust, which in turn strongly predicts both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. This result aligns with broader branding literature that links consistent delivery of brand promises to trust and long-term relationship strength (AIM, 2015; Analysing the Effects of Brand Authenticity on Consumer Trust and Loyalty, 2021). The particularly strong influence of product quality consistency reflects the centrality of reliability in FMCG categories, where frequent repeat purchases are common and any perceived decline can quickly erode trust.

Packaging and communication consistency also emerge as significant predictors of trust, though with slightly smaller effects than product quality. This aligns with packaging research showing that stable visual cues facilitate brand recognition and contribute to perceived dependability (Mahajan, 2015; Rajkumar & Jain, 2021), as well as with work on eco-friendly packaging that identifies consistent sustainable design as a driver of green brand equity and loyalty (JISEM Journal, 2025). Communication consistency across media reinforces brand values and mitigates confusion, consistent with findings that coherent narratives strengthen brand associations and trust (Vidya Journal, 2020; Marketing Journal, 2019).

The mediation analysis and SEM results demonstrate that trust is a key mechanism through which brand consistency influences loyalty, echoing the view that trust is the linchpin in consumer–brand relationships (AIM, 2015; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025). The partial mediation suggests that consistency also has a direct effect on loyalty, especially through sustained product quality, which may create habitual loyalty even when trust is not explicitly considered. These findings support reports that post-pandemic consumers place heightened emphasis on safety, reliability and transparency, rewarding brands that maintain consistent performance and messaging (NielsenIQ, 2024; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025).

Age and income differences in trust and loyalty indicate that middle-aged and higher-income consumers display stronger loyalty and trust, possibly due to greater exposure to brand communication and more stable purchasing patterns. This aligns with observations that loyalty is often higher among established households with stable preferences, while younger consumers may exhibit more experimentation and switching (Vidya Journal, 2020). Higher-income consumers may also be more sensitive to consistency and brand equity cues, as they can afford to prioritize perceived quality and reliability over price alone (Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, 2025; NielsenIQ, 2024).

Overall, the study extends the existing literature by explicitly modelling brand consistency as a multidimensional construct and empirically linking it to trust and loyalty in an Indian metropolitan context. It demonstrates that maintaining consistent quality, packaging and communication is not merely a design or operational concern but a strategic imperative for sustaining trust and loyalty in competitive FMCG markets such as Chennai.

8. Implications

The findings have several implications for FMCG managers and policymakers. For brand managers, the results highlight that consistency in product quality must remain the foundation of branding efforts. Any changes to formulation, sourcing or production that could affect perceived quality should be carefully managed and communicated to avoid undermining trust. Packaging decisions should balance the need for innovation with the preservation of recognizable brand elements, ensuring that updates do not compromise recognition or raise doubts about authenticity.

Communication strategies should aim for coherence across traditional and digital channels, aligning advertising, packaging messages and in-store promotions with core brand values. Brands should avoid contradictory or opportunistic messaging that might damage credibility, particularly around sensitive claims such as health, safety or sustainability. For firms emphasizing eco-friendly positioning, consistent use of sustainable materials and transparent communication can reinforce trust and loyalty among environmentally conscious consumers (JISEM Journal, 2025).

From a policy perspective, regulators and industry bodies can support consumer trust by encouraging clear labelling standards, truthful advertising and responsible claims, especially in health-related FMCG categories. Transparent guidelines and effective monitoring can reduce the risk of misleading communication, supporting an environment where genuine consistency and reliability are rewarded. For consumer advocacy groups and educators, promoting awareness of brand cues and consistency can help shoppers make informed decisions, particularly in lower-income segments where brand loyalty is often driven by trust in reliable, affordable products (Vidya Journal, 2020; Brand Loyalty and Consumer Perception in the Indian FMCG Sector, 2025).

9. Conclusion

This study examined the role of brand consistency in maintaining consumer trust and loyalty in the FMCG sector of Chennai. By conceptualizing brand consistency across product quality, packaging and communication, and by modelling its relationships with trust and loyalty, the study provides empirical evidence that consistency is a critical driver of brand relationships in an urban Indian market. Product quality consistency emerged as the strongest predictor of trust, with packaging and communication consistency also contributing significantly. Trust, in turn, strongly predicted brand loyalty, partially mediating the consistency–loyalty relationship. These findings underscore that, in an era of intensified competition and evolving consumer expectations, FMCG brands must treat consistency as a strategic priority. Future research could extend this work by comparing multiple cities, incorporating longitudinal designs to capture changes over time and exploring additional dimensions such as digital engagement consistency and corporate social responsibility communication.

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