A Study on The Influence of Perceived Quality on Brand Trust and Loyalty Towards FMCG Products

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of perceived quality on brand trust and loyalty for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) products. Perceived quality is a critical factor influencing consumer behaviour, and understanding its relationship with brand trust and loyalty is essential for FMCG companies to build strong customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth. The research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing surveys distributed to a sample of consumers (n = 227). Regression and correlation analyses examined the relationships between perceived quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty. The findings consistently demonstrated a strong positive correlation between perceived quality and brand trust and loyalty. Consumers who perceived higher quality in FMCG products exhibited greater trust in the associated brands and displayed increased loyalty towards them. The regression analysis revealed a direct positive effect of perceived quality on brand loyalty, even after controlling for brand trust. These findings offer valuable insights for FMCG companies. Prioritizing high-quality ingredients, manufacturing processes, and continuous product improvement is paramount for building strong brand perceptions. Effectively communicating these quality aspects through marketing and packaging can further enhance consumer trust. FMCG companies should also leverage brand trust to strengthen customer loyalty by designing loyalty programs that reward repeat purchases and create barriers to switching brands.

Keywords: Perceived Quality; Brand Trust; Brand Loyalty; FMCG Products; Consumer Behaviour; Factor Analysis; Correlation and Regression; Economic Health; Household Goods; Brand-Related Perceptions.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary marketplace, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) occupy a unique and significant space, contributing to consumers' daily lives and nations' economic health. These products, which include everyday items such as food, beverages, personal care, and household goods, are characterized by their quick turnover and relatively low cost [2]. The FMCG sector's dynamic nature necessitates a deep understanding of consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of brand-related perceptions and behaviours [3]. This study explores the intricate relationship between perceived quality, brand trust, and brand

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loyalty within the FMCG sector, providing crucial insights for academics and practitioners. Perceived quality is a critical determinant of consumer choice and behaviour, especially in the FMCG sector, where numerous brands compete for market share [9]. It refers to the consumer's judgment about a product's excellence or superiority. This perception is not solely based on the intrinsic attributes of the product but is also influenced by extrinsic factors such as brand name, advertising, and packaging [15]. In a market saturated with similar products, perceived quality becomes a key differentiator, influencing purchase decisions and driving brand preference [16].

Numerous studies have highlighted the pivotal role of perceived quality in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours. For instance, Al-Maaitah et al. [5] posit that perceived quality is a fundamental component of a brand's value proposition, directly impacting consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Verma et al. [4] emphasize that high perceived quality enhances a brand's competitive edge, allowing it to command premium prices and foster customer loyalty. In the context of FMCG products, where consumer decisions are often made swiftly and with minimal deliberation, perceived quality can significantly sway purchasing behaviour [17]. Perceived quality is crucial in marketing and consumer behaviour, significantly influencing purchase decisions and brand loyalty [20]. Unlike objective quality, based on measurable attributes, perceived quality is a consumer's subjective evaluation of a product's overall excellence or superiority [21]. This perception is shaped by various factors, including intrinsic attributes (such as performance and durability) and extrinsic cues (such as brand name, Price, and packaging) [23].

Intrinsic factors refer to the product's physical characteristics that contribute to its functional performance. These include the product's design, features, reliability, and durability [24]. For FMCG products, intrinsic attributes like taste, ingredients, and packaging functionality are pivotal in shaping perceived quality. Consumers assess these attributes based on their experiences and expectations, often influenced by prior usage and word-of-mouth recommendations [26]. On the other hand, extrinsic factors are external aspects that affect consumer perceptions but are not directly related to the product's physical characteristics [27]. The brand name is a powerful extrinsic cue, as established brands often evoke perceptions of higher quality due to their reputation and established track record [29]. Price is another extrinsic factor, where higher prices can sometimes lead consumers to infer better quality, especially without detailed product information. Packaging and advertising also significantly impact perceived quality by enhancing the product's appeal and communicating its value proposition [28].

Brand name and reputation are particularly influential in the FMCG sector, where product differentiation can be minimal, and consumer choices are often driven by familiarity and trust [30]. Established brands leverage their reputation to signal quality, reducing the perceived risk associated with purchase decisions. Ahmed et al. [8] emphasize that brand equity, which includes perceived quality, is a critical asset that can drive competitive advantage and consumer loyalty. In essence, a strong brand name acts as a heuristic that simplifies the decision-making process for consumers, leading them to associate the brand with reliability and superior quality [31]. Understanding the factors influencing perceived quality is vital for marketers aiming to enhance brand positioning and drive consumer loyalty [32]. Effective marketing strategies should focus on intrinsic and extrinsic factors to build a holistic perception of quality. For instance, product innovations that improve functionality and performance can enhance intrinsic perceptions, while strategic branding, premium pricing, and high-quality packaging can bolster extrinsic perceptions [33].

Moreover, consistent communication of quality through advertising and promotions can reinforce positive perceptions and build brand trust [35]. Marketers should also pay attention to consumer feedback and continuously improve product attributes to meet evolving expectations. In the FMCG sector, where competition is fierce and brand switching is common, maintaining high perceived quality is essential for sustaining consumer loyalty and achieving long-term success [36]. Brand trust is another critical element in the consumer-brand relationship, defined as the willingness of consumers to rely on a brand's ability to deliver on its promises [37]. Trust in a brand reduces perceived risks associated with purchase decisions and fosters a sense of security and confidence in the consumer [50]. In the highly competitive FMCG market, where consumers are bombarded with many choices, brand trust is a crucial determinant of brand preference and loyalty [51].

Brand trust is cultivated over time through consistent, positive consumer experiences and the fulfilment of brand promises [52]. Several factors contribute to brand trust development, including product quality, reliability, transparency, and ethical behaviour [53]. When consumers repeatedly experience high-quality products and services, their confidence in the brand's consistency and reliability grows. This is particularly important for FMCG products, where daily use and frequent repurchases are common [55]. Transparency and honesty in communication also play crucial roles in building trust. Brands that openly share information about their products, sourcing practices, and business operations are perceived as more trustworthy [56]. For instance, clear labelling, accurate advertising, and straightforward customer service policies help establish a brand's credibility. Ethical behaviour, such as corporate social responsibility initiatives and sustainable practices, further reinforces trust by demonstrating the brand's commitment to broader societal values [57].

Beyond functional attributes, emotional connection is integral to brand trust. Consumers are more likely to trust brands that resonate with them on a personal level. Emotional branding strategies that evoke positive feelings and align with consumers' values can strengthen trust. For example, brands that support community initiatives, environmental sustainability, or social causes can create a deeper emotional bond with consumers, fostering long-term trust and loyalty. Research indicates that brand trust is built over time through consistent positive experiences and fulfilling brand promises. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán et al. [19] argue that trust is a key antecedent of brand loyalty, reinforcing the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand. Moreover, Derindere Köseoğlu et al. [41] found that brand trust directly influences attitudinal and behavioural loyalty, underscoring its importance in maintaining long-term consumer relationships. Maintaining high levels of brand trust is essential for FMCG products, which are purchased frequently, ensuring repeat purchases and sustaining market share. The relationship between perceived quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty is complex and multifaceted. Perceived quality can be seen as a precursor to brand trust, as consumers are likelier to trust brands they perceive as high quality. This trust, in turn, fosters brand loyalty, which manifests as a consumer's willingness to purchase a brand and recommend it to others repeatedly. Understanding this relationship is vital for FMCG companies aiming to build strong, enduring brands in a competitive marketplace.

Brand trust has a profound impact on consumer behaviour. Trusted brands reduce perceived risks associated with purchase decisions, making consumers more comfortable and confident. This is particularly important in the FMCG sector, where low involvement and habitual buying patterns are prevalent. Trustworthy brands are more likely to enjoy repeat purchases, as consumers prefer to stick with brands they know and trust. Several theoretical frameworks support the linkage between perceived quality, brand trust, and loyalty. Gupta et al. [42] suggest that the product's perceived quality influences consumer satisfaction, which drives loyalty. Similarly, the Brand Equity Model of Hameed et al. [43] highlights perceived quality as a core component of brand equity, influencing consumer perceptions and behaviours towards the brand. Empirical studies, such as those by Verma et al. [46], further corroborate the notion that perceived quality and trust are critical antecedents of brand loyalty.

The FMCG sector's importance cannot be overstated, given its pervasive presence in consumers' daily lives and its significant economic impact. The sector's rapid growth and intense competition necessitate a keen understanding of the factors that drive consumer loyalty. In an environment where brand switching is common, and product differentiation is minimal, perceived quality and brand trust emerge as key levers for achieving competitive advantage and fostering customer loyalty. The implications of this study are manifold. For academics, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behaviour and brand management, offering new insights into the drivers of brand loyalty in the FMCG sector. For practitioners, it provides actionable strategies for enhancing perceived quality and building brand trust, leading to increased customer loyalty and sustained market success. By elucidating the interplay between perceived quality, brand trust, and loyalty, this study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and influencing consumer behaviour in the FMCG sector.

2. Review of Literature

Perceived quality is the consumer's judgment about a product's excellence or superiority. Studies have consistently shown that high perceived quality increases brand trust and loyalty. For instance, a study by Akoglu and Özbek [11] demonstrated that perceived quality positively influences brand trust, enhancing brand loyalty in the sports consumer sector. Although this study focuses on sports consumers, the principles are transferable to FMCG products, indicating a similar pattern where high-quality perceptions bolster trust and loyalty. Eelen et al. [18] reveal that brand experience directly affects perceived quality and trust, subsequently influencing brand loyalty. This finding aligns with the broader literature, indicating that enhancing consumer perceptions of quality can lead to stronger brand trust and, ultimately, greater loyalty. Brand trust refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity. Maaitah [49] highlights that trust is a crucial intermediary between perceived quality and brand loyalty. Their research indicates that when consumers perceive a brand as high-quality, they are more likely to trust it, leading to increased loyalty. This trust acts as a bridge, enhancing the relationship between perceived quality and consumer loyalty.

Brand loyalty in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector is a critical aspect of marketing strategies, influenced by perceived quality, brand trust, and customer satisfaction. Santos et al. [59] emphasize the significance of brand communities and social media in fostering consumer-brand relationships, impacting brand loyalty in the FMCG category. Ikramuddin & Mariyudi [13] delve into the mediating role of customer satisfaction and brand trust between perceived value and brand loyalty, showcasing the importance of these factors in influencing consumer behaviour. Aini & Ferdinand [34] contribute to understanding brand loyalty by exploring factors affecting it in the FMCG industry, focusing on self-congruence theory and its implications on brand loyalty. Adiwijaya et al. [25] further solidify the link between brand trust and brand loyalty, emphasizing the positive and significant impact of brand trust on brand loyalty. Jastine [54] underscores the positive effects of brand trust, brand image, and brand reputation on brand loyalty, highlighting the multifaceted nature of factors influencing consumer

loyalty. Arumugam [48] investigated the mediating role of brand trust between brand personality and brand loyalty, providing insights into the intricate relationships between these variables.

Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah [1] examine the impacts of brand experience and brand image on brand loyalty, emphasizing the mediating role of brand trust in shaping consumer loyalty. Khu & Sukesi [44] analyze the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty through brand satisfaction and brand trust, highlighting the interconnectedness of these variables in driving consumer loyalty. Winnie & Keni [58] explore the predictive power of brand experience and perceived quality on brand loyalty, with brand trust acting as a mediating variable in this relationship. Achmad et al. [10] delve into the influence of hedonic and utilitarian values on brand trust and loyalty, highlighting the significance of emotional and functional aspects in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. Darajarti et al. [6] highlight the pivotal role of brand trust and customer satisfaction as determinants of customer loyalty, with commitment mediating this relationship. Al-Maaitah et al. [47] investigate the influence of customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand image on customer loyalty, highlighting the interconnectedness of these variables in driving consumer loyalty. Natanael [45] explores the influence of service quality and brand image on consumer brand loyalty, with brand trust serving as a crucial mediating variable in this relationship.

Brand loyalty is the consumer's preference for a particular brand over others. Recent studies, such as those by Foroudi et al. [38], have found that perceived quality and brand trust are significant predictors of brand loyalty. Specifically, FMCG products with higher perceived quality and established trust are more likely to retain loyal customers, even in competitive markets. Pane et al. [22] investigate whether trust is necessary to increase loyalty among adult consumers, focusing on how brand experience predicts brand loyalty through trust, emphasizing the importance of trust in fostering consumer loyalty. Dludla & Dlamini [7] argue for the mediating role of brand trust in transforming brand values into brand loyalty, emphasizing the importance of trust in driving consumer loyalty. Ikramuddin et al. [14] and Venkateswaran et al. [39] highlight the influence of customer satisfaction, brand trust, and service quality on brand loyalty, showcasing the interconnectedness of these factors in shaping consumer loyalty. Hidayanti et al. [12] focus on brand commitment and trust towards brand loyalty in the context of branded laptops in Indonesia, showcasing how brand experience and trust contribute to enhancing brand commitment and loyalty. Raza et al. [33] and Venkateswaran et al. [40] provide insights into the impact of brand equity drivers on purchase intention, where brand loyalty, perception, and preference play crucial roles in shaping consumer behaviour.

3. Research Methodology

The applied research design in the present study is descriptive research. The sample respondents were selected from different retail outlets. A sample of 300 respondents was met, the questionnaires were distributed, and responses were collected. After the scrutiny, 227 valued questionnaires were finalized, and the data were analyzed using SPSS 26. The results are given below.

4. Analysis and Findings

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.887, which is well above the recommended threshold of 0.8. This indicates a very good sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of Sphericity has a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000, which is less than the conventional level of 0.05 (Table 1).

Table 1: Factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				.799
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square			9336.313
	df			210
	Sig.			.000
Rotated Component Matrixᵃ				
		Component		
		1	**2**	**3**
This brand is reliable and dependable.		.927		
I would not switch to another brand, even if it offered similar products.		.924		
I am committed to purchasing this brand regularly.		.909		
The product's packaging reflects its high quality.		.908		
The product's quality is consistent across purchases.		.900		
I prefer this brand over others, even when other brands are on sale.		.860		

The product meets high standards of quality.	.813		
I feel confident in the safety of this brand's products.		.801	
I feel a strong connection to this brand.		.779	
I recommend this brand to my friends and family.		.752	
The product is durable and long-lasting.		.747	
The product offers excellent value for its Price.		.746	
This brand is honest and transparent with its customers.		.735	
The product is made with superior materials.		.731	
This brand consistently meets my expectations.			.935
I trust this brand will act in my best interest.			.927
I trust this brand to deliver what it promises.			.911
The product performs reliably every time I use it.			.898
I am likely to buy new products introduced by this brand.			.885
I am willing to continue buying this brand even if its prices increase.			.844
I believe this brand cares about its customers.			.806
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.			

This statistically significant result rejects the null hypothesis of Sphericity. It suggests the variables in the study data are likely correlated and strengthens the rationale for using factor analysis to identify underlying factors that explain correlations among these variables (Table 2).

Hypothesis - H1: Perceived quality of FMCG products positively and significantly affects brand trust.

Table 2: Correlation between perceived quality and brand trust

		PERQ	**BRTRU**
PERQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	183.639	136.978
	Covariance	.813	.606
	N	227	227
BRTRU	Pearson Correlation	.733**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	136.978	190.035
	Covariance	.606	.841
	N	227	227
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation analysis shows a positive and significant correlation between perceived quality (PERQ) and brand trust (BRTRU) for FMCG products. The Pearson correlation coefficient (0.733) is positive, indicating that perceived quality and brand trust tend to move in the same direction. As perceived quality increases, brand trust also increases. This suggests a strong positive relationship between these two variables.

The Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than the significance level of 0.05. This means the observed correlation is statistically significant. Hence, there's an association between perceived quality and brand trust. Consumers who perceive higher quality in FMCG products are likelier to trust the brands selling those products. It indicates that FMCG companies want to build brand trust through quality (Table 3).

H2: Perceived quality of FMCG products positively and significantly affects brand loyalty.

Table 3: Correlation between perceived quality and brand loyalty

		PERQ	BRLOY
PERQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.880**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	183.639	165.965
	Covariance	.813	.734
	N	227	227
BRLOY	Pearson Correlation	.880**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	165.965	193.850
	Covariance	.734	.858
	N	227	227
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation analysis shows a positive and significant correlation between perceived quality (PERQ) and brand loyalty (BRLOY) for FMCG products. The Pearson correlation coefficient (0.880) is positive, indicating that perceived quality and brand loyalty tend to move in the same direction.

As perceived quality increases, brand loyalty also increases, and vice versa. This suggests a strong positive relationship between these two variables. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than the significance level of 0.05. This means the observed correlation is statistically significant. Hence, there's an association between perceived quality and brand trust.

Consumers who perceive higher quality in FMCG products are more likely to be loyal to the brands selling those products. It indicates that FMCG companies want to build brand loyalty through quality (Table 4).

Table 4: Regression analysis among perceived quality and brand loyalty

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.880[a]	.774	.773	.442	1.860
a. Predictors: (Constant), PERQ; b. Dependent Variable: BRLOY					

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	149.992	1	149.992	769.48	.000[b]
	Residual	43.858	225	.195		
	Total	193.850	226			
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY; b. Predictors: (Constant), PERQ						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.325	.128		2.532	.012
	PERQ	.904	.033	.880	27.739	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY						

The regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect of perceived quality (PERQ) on brand loyalty (BRLOY) (b = 0.611, Sig. = 0.001). This shows that consumers with higher perceptions of FMCG product quality exhibit greater brand loyalty. Brand trust (BRTRU) was included to assess its mediating role.

While the coefficient for BRTRU had a positive sign (b = 0.102), it was not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.203). This suggests partial mediation, where PERQ directly affects BRLOY even after controlling for BRTRU (Table 5).

Table 5: Regression Analysis of brand trust and brand loyalty

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.691[a]	.478	.475	.671	1.801
a. Predictors: (Constant), BRTRU; b. Dependent Variable: BRLOY					

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	92.602	1	92.602	205.787	.000[b]
	Residual	101.248	225	.450		
	Total	193.850	226			
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY; b. Predictors: (Constant), BRTRU						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.089	.193		5.628	.000
	BRTRU	.698	.049	.691	14.345	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY						

The regression analysis yielded a significant positive effect of perceived quality (BRTRU) on brand loyalty (BRLOY) (b = 0.698, Sig. = 0.000), supporting the relationship. This indicates that brand loyalty increases by an average of 0.698 units for each unit increase in perceived quality.

The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.801) suggests no significant serial correlation in the residuals, fulfilling a key assumption of linear regression. These findings prove that perceived quality strongly predicts brand loyalty for FMCG products (Table 6).

Table 6: Regression analysis among perceived quality, brand trust and brand loyalty

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.882[a]	.778	.776	.438	1.848
a. Predictors: (Constant), PERQ, BRTRU; b. Dependent Variable: BRLOY					

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	150.886	2	75.443	393.327	.000[b]
	Residual	42.965	224	.192		
	Total	193.850	226			
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY; b. Predictors: (Constant), PERQ, BRTRU						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.223	.136		1.644	.102
	BRTRU	.101	.047	.100	2.159	.032
	PERQ	.829	.048	.806	17.432	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BRLOY						

The regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect of perceived quality (PERQ) on brand trust (BRLOY) (b = 0.733, Sig. = 0.000) (Figure 1).
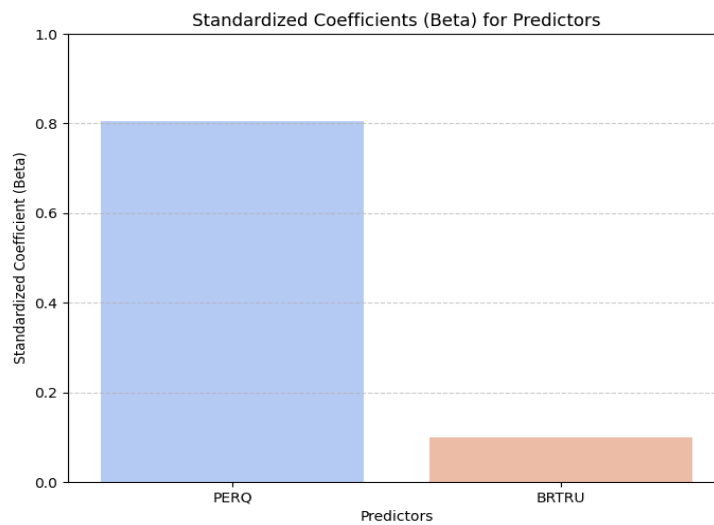
Figure 1: Standardized Coefficients (beta) for Predictors

This indicates that consumers with higher perceptions of FMCG product quality exhibit greater trust in the associated brands. These findings suggest a strong positive association between perceived quality and brand trust for FMCG products.

5. Managerial Implications for FMCG Companies

5.1. Prioritize Perceived Quality

- The research consistently highlights a strong positive correlation between perceived quality and brand trust and loyalty for FMCG products.
- Ensure products consistently meet or exceed customer functionality, performance, and safety expectations.
- Implement strong quality control protocols to minimize defects and maintain consistent quality standards.
- Continuously innovate and improve products based on consumer feedback and market trends.

5.2. Leverage Brand Trust for Customer Loyalty

- Communicate the quality aspects of their products through marketing and packaging. Highlight features and benefits that contribute to perceived quality.
- Be transparent about ingredients, sourcing, and manufacturing processes. Address customer concerns promptly and honestly.
- Design loyalty programs that reward repeat purchases and incentivize brand-switching barriers.

Overall, FMCG companies can establish strong customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth by focusing on delivering high-quality products, actively building brand trust, and understanding the nuances of the quality-trust-loyalty relationship.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of perceived quality on brand trust and loyalty for FMCG products. The findings consistently demonstrated a strong positive correlation between perceived quality and brand trust and loyalty. Consumers who perceived higher quality in FMCG products were likelier to trust the brands and exhibit greater loyalty towards them. Prioritizing high-quality ingredients, manufacturing processes, and continuous product improvement are paramount to building strong brand perceptions. Furthermore, effectively communicating these quality aspects through marketing and packaging can further enhance consumer trust. FMCG companies should also consider leveraging brand trust to strengthen customer loyalty by designing loyalty programs that reward repeat purchases and create barriers to switching brands. While the study highlights the importance of perceived quality and brand trust, further research is needed to establish the mediating role of brand trust. Future studies with larger sample sizes or more robust mediation analysis techniques can provide more conclusive evidence. Additionally, exploring if the mediating effect of brand trust varies across different FMCG product categories would be valuable

for developing targeted strategies. In conclusion, this study shows the critical role of perceived quality in fostering brand trust and loyalty for FMCG products. FMCG companies can establish strong customer relationships and drive sustainable business growth by prioritizing quality, actively building brand trust, and understanding the nuances of the quality-trust-loyalty relationship.

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