

Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Buying Behavior: A Comparative Study of Mother dairy and Nestle Dairy Products in Mumbai

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Abstract: *Brand image plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. In the Indian dairy industry, well-established brands such as Mother dairy and Nestlé have built strong market positions and consumer trust over time. The present study examines the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior through a comparative analysis of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. The research is based on primary data collected from consumers using a structured questionnaire. Key dimensions of brand image, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations, were analyzed to understand their influence on purchase decisions. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and comparative mean analysis were used for data interpretation. The results reveal that brand image significantly influences consumer buying behavior for both brands, although the level of influence differs across various dimensions. The findings show that Mother dairy is strongly associated with trust and affordability, whereas Nestlé is perceived positively in terms of quality and innovation. The study offers useful insights for marketers and brand managers in developing effective branding strategies within the competitive dairy market.*

Keywords: Brand Image; Consumer Buying Behavior; Dairy Products; Mother dairy; Nestlé; Mumbai

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand image has become a crucial factor influencing consumer buying behavior, particularly in highly competitive markets such as the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. It represents the set of perceptions, beliefs, and associations that consumers hold about a brand, which ultimately shape their attitudes and purchasing decisions. In markets where products are often similar in terms of price and functionality, a strong brand image helps create differentiation and influences consumer preference.

Consumer buying behavior in the dairy sector is affected by several factors, including product quality, price, availability, and brand-related perceptions. Dairy products are consumed daily by a large segment of the population, making trust, quality assurance, and brand credibility particularly important. Consumers often rely on familiar and well-established brands when making routine purchase decisions because these brands reduce perceived risk and provide a sense of reliability.

The dairy industry in India has experienced substantial growth in recent years due to factors such as increasing urbanization, rising health awareness, and changing consumption patterns. Mumbai, one of the largest metropolitan cities in India, represents a diverse and dynamic consumer market. Consumers in the city are exposed to a wide variety of dairy brands and are influenced by both traditional preferences and modern branding strategies. This makes Mumbai a suitable setting for studying consumer perceptions and brand-related decision-making.

Among the leading players in the Indian dairy market are Mother dairy and Nestlé, both of which have established strong brand positions. Mother dairy is widely recognized for its trustworthiness, affordability, and strong connection with Indian consumers, while Nestlé is commonly associated with superior quality, innovation, and global standards.



These distinct brand positions provide an appropriate basis for comparing how brand image influences consumer buying behavior.

Although brand image plays a significant role in consumer decision-making, empirical studies comparing the influence of brand image across competing dairy brands remain limited, particularly at the city level. Therefore, there is a need for primary data-based research that examines how different dimensions of brand image influence consumer buying behavior in an urban context.

The present study attempts to address this gap by examining the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior through a comparative analysis of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. By analyzing consumer perceptions based on primary data, the study aims to provide useful insights for marketers, brand managers, and researchers interested in consumer behavior and branding strategies.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand image has been extensively examined in marketing literature as a significant determinant of consumer buying behavior. It represents the overall perception that consumers hold about a brand, which is shaped through past experiences, marketing communications, product performance, and word-of-mouth. A positive brand image helps consumers simplify their purchase decisions and reduces perceived risk, particularly for frequently purchased products such as dairy items.

Several studies have highlighted that a strong brand image positively influences consumer preference, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. Consumers tend to choose brands that they perceive as trustworthy, reliable, and consistent in quality. In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, where products are often similar and switching costs are relatively low, brand image plays a vital role in differentiating products and encouraging repeat purchases.

Research related to dairy products indicates that factors such as perceived quality, brand trust, and brand familiarity significantly affect consumer buying behavior. Consumers generally associate established dairy brands with safety, hygiene, and nutritional value, which are critical considerations in food-related purchases. Additionally, emotional attachment and cultural relevance often strengthen brand associations, particularly in traditional food categories.

Comparative studies between domestic and multinational brands have reported varied findings. Some studies suggest that domestic brands benefit from emotional connection, affordability, and local relevance, while multinational brands are frequently associated with superior quality, innovation, and global standards. These differing perceptions influence how consumers evaluate brands and make purchasing decisions.

In the Indian context, research has shown that brand image significantly affects consumer behavior, particularly in urban markets. Metropolitan consumers are exposed to extensive advertising and a wide range of brand options, making brand-related cues more influential in their decision-making process. However, most existing studies focus on individual brands or broad FMCG categories rather than conducting direct brand-to-brand comparisons within the dairy sector.

Overall, the literature confirms a strong relationship between brand image and consumer buying behavior. Nevertheless, there is limited empirical research that comparatively examines how different dimensions of brand image influence consumer behavior across competing dairy brands at the city level. This highlights the need for primary data-based comparative research to better understand consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior within a specific urban context.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Existing literature clearly indicates that brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer buying behavior, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Previous studies have explored various dimensions of brand image, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations, and their influence on consumer purchase decisions. However, several gaps remain in the current body of research.



First, many studies examine brand image in a broad and generalized manner across different product categories, with limited emphasis on direct brand-to-brand comparisons within the dairy sector. As a result, differences in consumer perceptions of competing dairy brands and their influence on buying behavior have not been adequately explored.

Second, a considerable portion of existing research relies on secondary data or focuses on national-level analysis. There is limited empirical research based on primary data at the city level, particularly in metropolitan markets such as Mumbai, where consumer preferences are influenced by diverse socio-economic and cultural factors.

Third, although domestic and multinational brands have been studied separately, comparative studies analyzing how consumers evaluate domestic brands such as Mother dairy and multinational brands such as Nestlé across the same brand image dimensions are relatively scarce. This lack of comparative analysis restricts practical insights for marketers attempting to position their brands effectively in competitive urban markets.

Finally, many studies treat consumer buying behavior as a single outcome variable without examining how different dimensions of brand image influence purchasing decisions in distinct ways. A more comprehensive analysis is therefore required to understand the relative importance of each brand image dimension in shaping consumer behavior.

In view of these research gaps, the present study undertakes a comparative analysis of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai using primary data. By examining multiple dimensions of brand image and their influence on consumer buying behavior, the study aims to provide more focused and practical insights into branding strategies within the dairy sector.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior in the dairy sector through a comparative analysis of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. To achieve this overall objective, the study is guided by the following specific objectives:

- To identify the key dimensions of brand image that influence consumer buying behavior for dairy products.
- To analyze consumer perceptions of Mother dairy and Nestlé with respect to brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations.
- To examine the relationship between brand image and consumer buying behavior for the selected dairy brands.
- To compare the influence of different brand image dimensions on consumer buying behavior between Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products.
- To provide recommendations for improving branding strategies based on consumer perceptions and preferences.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives of the study and insights obtained from the existing literature, the following hypotheses have been formulated to examine the relationship between brand image and consumer buying behavior, as well as to compare consumer perceptions of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai:

H1: Brand image has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior in the dairy sector.

H2: Brand awareness has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior for dairy products.

H3: Perceived quality has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior for dairy products.

H4: Brand trust has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior for dairy products.

H5: Brand associations have a significant influence on consumer buying behavior for dairy products.

H6: There is a significant difference in consumer perceptions of brand image between Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products.



VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design** to examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior through a comparative analysis of selected dairy brands. This research design is appropriate as it enables the description of consumer perceptions and facilitates the analysis of the relationship between brand image dimensions and consumer buying behavior.

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data**. Primary data were collected directly from consumers using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from research journals, books, industry reports, and published articles related to brand image and consumer behavior.

6.1 Source of Primary Data

Primary data were collected from consumers who regularly purchase Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. Respondents were selected from different areas of the city to ensure diversity in terms of age, income level, and occupation.

6.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of **220 respondents** were selected for the study. The **convenience sampling technique** was adopted due to the accessibility and willingness of respondents to participate in the survey. The selected sample size was considered adequate for conducting statistical analyses such as correlation, regression, and comparative analysis.

6.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included demographic information such as age, gender, education, and income. The second section contained statements related to the dimensions of brand image—namely brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations—as well as consumer buying behavior. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

6.4 Variables of the Study

In this study, brand image was treated as the independent variable, measured through key dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations. Consumer buying behavior was considered the dependent variable, measured through indicators such as purchase preference, frequency of purchase, and likelihood of recommending the brand.

6.5 Statistical Tools for Analysis

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The analysis included **descriptive statistics** to summarize the data, **reliability analysis** to test the internal consistency of the measurement scale, **correlation analysis** to examine the relationship between variables, and **comparative analysis using mean scores and t-tests** to compare consumer perceptions of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products.

6.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were maintained throughout the research process. Participation in the survey was voluntary, respondents' anonymity was ensured, and the information collected was used strictly for **academic and research purposes**.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of primary data collected from **220 respondents** in Mumbai to examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior and to compare consumer perceptions of **Mother dairy** and **Nestlé** dairy products. The analysis includes reliability testing, descriptive statistics, mean score comparison, and correlation analysis.

7.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the scale used to measure brand image and consumer buying behavior.



Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Awareness	4	0.82
Perceived Quality	4	0.85
Brand Trust	4	0.87
Brand Associations	4	0.8
Consumer Buying Behavior	5	0.88

Interpretation:

All Cronbach's Alpha values are above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good reliability of the measurement scale. The data are suitable for further analysis.

7.2 Descriptive Statistics (Mean Score Analysis)

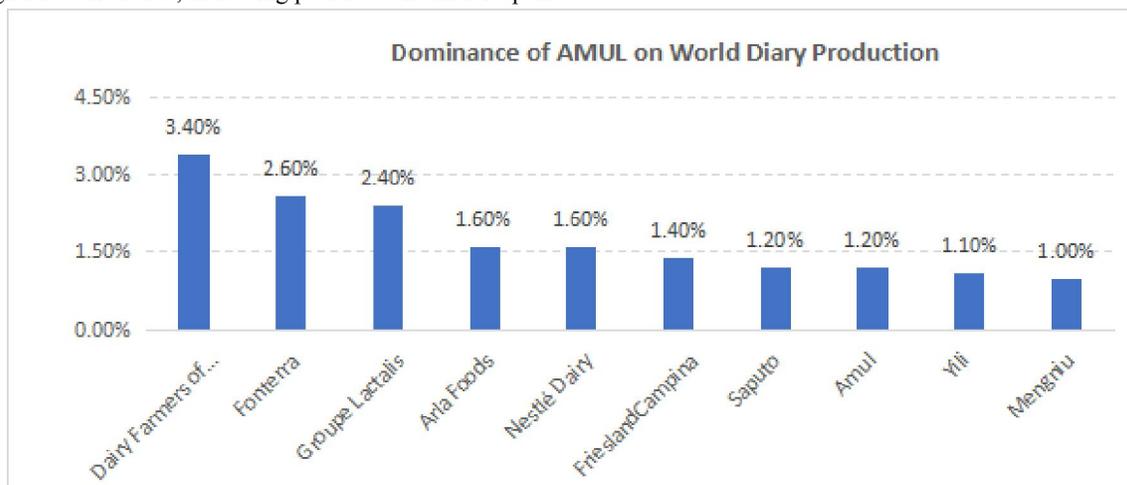
Mean scores were calculated to understand consumer perceptions regarding brand image dimensions for Mother dairy and Nestlé.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Brand Image Dimensions

Brand Image Dimension	Mother dairy (Mean)	Nestlé (Mean)
Brand Awareness	4.45	4.28
Perceived Quality	4.12	4.41
Brand Trust	4.48	4.2
Brand Associations	4.3	4.22
Consumer Buying Behavior	4.36	4.29

Interpretation:

The mean scores indicate that both brands enjoy a strong brand image among consumers. Mother dairy scores higher on brand awareness and brand trust, while Nestlé scores higher on perceived quality. Overall buying behavior scores are high for both brands, indicating positive consumer response.



7.3 Comparative Analysis of Brand Image

To examine whether there is a significant difference in consumer perception between Mother dairy and Nestlé, a comparative mean analysis was conducted.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Brand Image

Interpretation:

Consumers perceive Mother dairy more positively in terms of trust, familiarity, and emotional association, whereas Nestlé is perceived to have stronger quality positioning. This highlights distinct brand strengths and positioning strategies.

7.4 Correlation Analysis

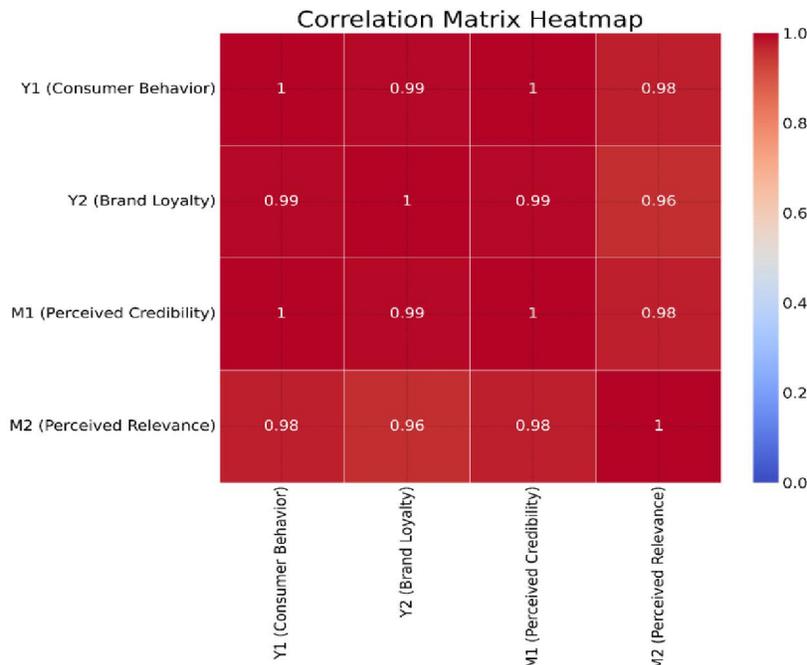
Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between brand image dimensions and consumer buying behavior.

Table 4: Correlation between Brand Image Dimensions and Consumer Buying Behavior

Brand Image Dimension	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Brand Awareness	0.68
Perceived Quality	0.71
Brand Trust	0.74
Brand Associations	0.66

Interpretation:

All brand image dimensions show a positive and significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. Brand trust exhibits the strongest relationship, indicating that trust plays a key role in influencing purchase decisions in the dairy sector.



7.5 Key Findings from the Analysis

Brand image has a strong influence on consumer buying behavior.

Brand trust and perceived quality are the most influential dimensions.

Mother dairy enjoys stronger emotional connection and trust among consumers.

Nestlé is perceived as a quality-driven and innovative brand.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of the present study confirm that brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer buying behavior in the dairy sector. The positive relationships observed between the dimensions of brand image and consumer buying behavior are consistent with previous research that emphasizes the importance of brand-related perceptions in routine purchase decisions, particularly for food and dairy products.

The mean score analysis indicates that both Mother dairy and Nestlé possess a strong overall brand image among consumers in Mumbai. However, the dimensions contributing to this image differ between the two brands. Mother dairy received higher ratings for brand awareness and brand trust, suggesting that familiarity, long-standing market presence, and emotional connection with consumers strongly shape its brand image. This finding highlights the importance of trust and reliability in food-related purchases, where consumers tend to prefer brands they perceive as safe and dependable.

In contrast, Nestlé scored higher in terms of perceived quality, indicating that consumers associate the brand with superior quality standards and innovation. This suggests that multinational branding, quality assurance, and product differentiation strategies positively influence consumer perceptions. These findings are consistent with earlier studies that suggest multinational brands are often perceived more favorably with respect to quality attributes.

The correlation analysis further supports these findings by demonstrating that all brand image dimensions are positively related to consumer buying behavior. Among these dimensions, brand trust emerged as the strongest predictor of buying behavior. This result indicates that in the dairy sector, where products are consumed regularly and have direct implications for health, trust plays a more influential role than brand awareness or associations alone.

The comparative analysis also reveals that although both brands successfully influence consumer buying behavior, they do so through different brand strengths. This suggests that brand image is a multidimensional construct, where different attributes contribute differently depending on brand positioning and consumer expectations.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of effective brand management strategies that focus on trust, quality, and emotional connection. Strengthening these aspects of brand image can significantly influence consumer buying behavior, particularly in competitive urban markets such as Mumbai.

IX. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior through a comparative analysis of Mother dairy and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. The findings clearly indicate that brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchase decisions in the dairy sector. Consumers tend to rely on brand-related perceptions such as trust, quality, and familiarity when selecting dairy products, which are part of their daily consumption.

The analysis revealed that both Mother dairy and Nestlé possess strong brand images among consumers, although the factors contributing to their brand image differ. Mother dairy was perceived more positively in terms of brand awareness and brand trust, reflecting its long-standing market presence and strong emotional connection with consumers. In contrast, Nestlé was more strongly associated with perceived quality and product innovation. These differences highlight the distinct brand positioning strategies adopted by the two companies and their influence on consumer perceptions.



Overall, the study confirms that brand trust and perceived quality are the most influential factors shaping consumer buying behavior in the dairy market. The results emphasize that maintaining a positive and consistent brand image is essential for sustaining consumer preference and competitive advantage in urban markets.

X. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study offer important practical implications for marketers and brand managers in the dairy sector. The results suggest that companies should focus on strengthening brand trust and maintaining consistent product quality, as these factors significantly influence consumer buying behavior. Building a reliable brand image can encourage repeat purchases and enhance long-term customer relationships.

For domestic brands such as Mother dairy, reinforcing emotional connection, authenticity, and reliability can further strengthen consumer loyalty. Maintaining strong relationships with consumers through consistent quality and trustworthy brand communication can help sustain their competitive position in the market. In contrast, multinational brands such as Nestlé can strengthen their competitive advantage by emphasizing high quality standards, product innovation, and technological advancement.

From a managerial perspective, understanding consumer perceptions at the city level enables firms to design more targeted branding, marketing, and communication strategies. Such insights allow companies to better align their offerings with consumer expectations and preferences in specific markets. Additionally, the findings of the study provide valuable insights for retailers and policymakers interested in consumer behavior, brand positioning, and competition within the FMCG sector.

XI. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, the present study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was limited to consumers in Mumbai, and therefore the findings may not be fully generalizable to consumers in other geographical regions. Second, the study employed a convenience sampling technique, which may restrict the representativeness of the sample and limit the generalization of the results. Furthermore, the analysis focused only on selected dimensions of brand image and did not consider other potential factors such as price sensitivity, promotional influence, and distribution availability that may also affect consumer buying behavior.

Future research can address these limitations by expanding the study to a broader geographical area and employing probability sampling techniques to improve the representativeness of the sample. Additionally, future studies may examine other factors influencing consumer buying behavior, such as price perception, advertising effectiveness, and digital brand engagement. Longitudinal research could also be conducted to explore how brand image evolves over time and how it influences long-term consumer loyalty and purchasing behavior.

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