

“A Study on the Role of Modern Marketing in Habit Formation and Brand Moats in FMCG”

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Abstract

The research study examines the role of modern marketing strategies in transforming brand awareness into habitual consumption within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. The research aims to understand how continuous marketing exposure through digital advertising, social media engagement, loyalty programs, and experiential promotions influences consumer habits and strengthens long-term brand moats. The study focuses on consumers aged 18–60 residing in Navi Mumbai. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from 100 respondents using a stratified random sampling technique, supported by secondary data from academic journals and industry reports. The findings indicate that modern marketing significantly reinforces brand recall and encourages routine purchasing behavior, leading consumers to rely on familiar brands rather than active comparison during purchase decisions. Such habit-driven consumption enhances customer retention and provides FMCG brands with sustainable competitive advantages. The study highlights the strategic importance of integrating marketing efforts into consumers' daily routines to build strong brand moats in highly competitive markets.

Keywords

Modern Marketing, FMCG, Habit Formation, Brand Awareness, Brand Moats, Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry is one of the most competitive sectors of the global economy, consisting of products such as food, beverages, personal care items, and household essentials that are purchased frequently and consumed quickly. Due to their routine nature, FMCG purchase decisions are typically low-involvement and strongly influenced by habit rather than detailed evaluation. As many products offer similar functional benefits and pricing, brands compete primarily for consumer attention, recall, and preference.

With the rise of digital technologies, modern marketing has evolved beyond traditional mass advertising to include personalized communication, social media engagement, influencer marketing, and data-driven targeting. These strategies allow brands to interact with consumers more frequently and integrate themselves into daily routines. Over time, repeated exposure and consistent usage can lead to habit formation, where consumers automatically prefer certain brands. Such habitual consumption creates strong psychological loyalty, acting as a competitive moat that helps FMCG brands sustain long-term market advantage. Through a focused analysis of common consumers aged 18–60 residing in Navi Mumbai, this study seeks to examine whether modern marketing strategies significantly transform brand awareness into habitual FMCG consumption, thereby strengthening long-term brand moats.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. (Tarannum Jahan, Arfath Jahan, 2024) conducted research on “A Study on Importance of Branding and Its Effects on Products in Business”. This study examined how branding influences consumer perception, purchase decisions, and brand loyalty. The findings indicate that strong visual identity, messaging, and brand experience enhance market differentiation and consumer trust. Digital and social media platforms further strengthen branding effectiveness through continuous consumer engagement.

2. (Apriyanto Muhamad, Ammar Muhtadi, 2026) conducted research on “Digital Branding Strategies for Building Competitive Advantage in the Online Business Era”. Using survey data from 130 respondents, the study found that digital engagement, online brand presence, and consistent content significantly enhance competitive

advantage. Brand trust and digital interaction were identified as key drivers of customer loyalty and sustained market positioning.

3. (John Volker, Michael Phillips, 2024) conducted research on “Entrepreneurial Marketing Provide an Economic Moat for Small and Emerging Firms”. Using Porter’s Five Forces framework and case analysis, the study found that strong customer engagement, network effects, and brand loyalty can help firms develop narrow economic moats. Strategic marketing and digital community building were identified as key factors supporting long-term differentiation.

4. (Dr. D. Suganya, Dr. R. Ashok Kumar, 2025) conducted research on “A Study on Impulsive Buying Behaviour of Consumers”. Based on survey data from 150 respondents, the study analyzed demographic and marketing influences on impulsive buying behaviour. The findings reveal that age and income significantly influence impulsive purchases, while digital platforms and e-commerce environments further stimulate such buying behaviour.

5. (Nyimas Azzahra, Angga Febrian, 2023) conducted research on “The Effect of Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness, and Brand Association in Building Brand Loyalty Among Young Consumers”. Using survey data from 100 respondents, the study found that perceived quality significantly enhances brand awareness and brand loyalty. Brand awareness plays a crucial role in loyalty formation, while luxury brand association showed limited influence on loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I. Objective of Study:

- To study how FMCG brands embed their identity in consumers’ minds through continuous marketing exposure and reminders that encourage habit formation and strengthen long-term brand moats.
- To analyze modern marketing strategies including digital advertising, social media engagement, experiential campaigns, and behavioural nudges used by FMCG brands to reinforce consumer routines and brand recall.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in converting brand awareness into repeated consumption patterns and assess how such behavioural consistency contributes to sustainable competitive advantage for FMCG brands.

II. Scope of Study: The study focuses on FMCG consumers aged 18–60 residing in Navi Mumbai, examining how modern marketing strategies such as digital advertising, social media engagement, loyalty programs, and in-store promotions influence habitual purchasing behaviour.

III. Limitations of Study:

- The study is restricted to the FMCG sector, limiting the generalization of findings to other industries with different product characteristics and consumer decision-making patterns.
- The research adopts a cross-sectional design, which captures consumer behaviour at a single point in time and may not reflect long-term habit formation dynamics.
- External factors such as pricing strategies, product availability, peer influence, and seasonal demand variations are not analyzed separately within the scope of this research.

IV. Hypothesis: Modern marketing strategies significantly transform brand awareness into habitual FMCG consumption, thereby strengthening long-term brand moats and enabling firms to sustain competitive advantage in highly competitive markets.

V. Significance of Study: This study highlights how modern marketing strategies influence consumer behaviour and habit formation, offering insights for marketers to design campaigns that strengthen brand loyalty, repeat purchases, and sustainable competitive advantage in FMCG markets.

VI. Sample Design: The study considers FMCG consumers aged 18–60 residing in Navi Mumbai, with a sample size of 100 respondents selected using stratified random sampling to ensure balanced demographic representation.

VII. Data Collection Techniques and Tools: Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from 100 respondents, while secondary data was obtained from journals, reports, and publications. Data analysis was conducted using percentage and percentile methods.

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DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Q1. How frequently do you encounter FMCG brand advertisements in your daily life?

Categories	Responses	Response %
Very frequently	45	45%
Frequently	37	37%
Occasionally	11	11%
Rarely	3	3%
Never	4	4%

Interpretation: The data shows very high exposure to FMCG brand advertisements in daily life. Most respondents encounter ads very frequently (45%) or frequently (37%), indicating strong marketing presence across digital and offline platforms. This repeated exposure strengthens brand recall and familiarity, supporting habit formation. Only a small share see ads occasionally, rarely, or never, confirming the effectiveness of modern marketing.

Q2. How often do you see FMCG marketing on digital platforms (social media, YouTube, apps)?

Categories	Responses	Response %
Very often	45	45%
Often	37	37%
Sometimes	11	11%
Rarely	3	3%
Never	4	4%

Interpretation:The data shows high visibility of FMCG marketing on digital platforms. Most respondents see such marketing very often (45%) or often (37%), highlighting strong presence across social media, video platforms, and mobile apps. This frequent exposure keeps brands top-of-mind during purchase decisions. Few encounter it sometimes, rarely, or never, supporting the hypothesis that digital marketing drives habitual FMCG consumption.

Q3. Repeated advertisements make FMCG brands feel trustworthy to me.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	48	48%
Agree	26	26%
Neutral	15	15%
Disagree	9	9%
Strongly disagree	2	2%

Interpretation:The data shows repeated advertisements increase trust in FMCG brands. Most respondents strongly agree (48%) or agree (26%) that repeated ads make brands feel more trustworthy. Few remain neutral or disagree. This indicates

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consistency and familiarity help build trust. As trust encourages repeated purchases, the findings support that modern marketing strengthens habitual FMCG consumption.

Q4. I feel more comfortable buying FMCG brands I recognize from marketing.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	59	59%
Agree	23	23%
Neutral	12	12%
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly disagree	2	2%

Interpretation: The results show strong influence of brand recognition on FMCG purchase comfort. Most respondents strongly agree (59%) or agree (23%) that they feel more comfortable buying recognized brands. Few remain neutral or disagree. Familiarity reduces perceived risk and simplifies decisions. The findings support the hypothesis that marketing-driven recognition encourages habitual FMCG purchasing and strengthens long-term brand loyalty.

Q5. I put little effort into deciding between FMCG brands during purchase.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	51	51%
Agree	24	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	14	14%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly disagree	4	4%

Interpretation: The findings show most respondents put little effort into choosing FMCG brands. About 75% agree that brand selection is automatic and habitual. Repeated marketing exposure reduces decision effort and encourages default brand choices. This behavior reinforces loyalty and limits switching. Overall, the results support that modern marketing converts awareness into habitual FMCG consumption.

Q6. I usually buy certain FMCG brands without actively comparing alternatives.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	47	47%
Agree	27	27%
Neutral	16	16%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly disagree	4	4%

Interpretation: The findings show most respondents put little effort into choosing FMCG brands. About 75% agree that brand selection is automatic and habitual. Repeated marketing exposure reduces decision effort and encourages default brand choices. This behavior reinforces loyalty and limits switching. Overall, the results support that modern marketing converts awareness into habitual FMCG consumption.

Q7. Digital ads or online reminders influence me to repurchase the same FMCG brand.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	50	50%
Agree	30	30%
Neutral	10	10%

Disagree	6	6%
Strongly disagree	4	4%

Interpretation: The results show digital advertisements and online reminders strongly influence FMCG repurchase behavior. About 80% of respondents agree that digital marketing encourages them to buy the same brand again. Frequent online exposure reinforces brand recall and keeps brands top-of-mind. Low disagreement indicates limited resistance, supporting that digital marketing strengthens habitual FMCG consumption and repeat purchases.

Q8. Free samples or product trials increase my chances of continuing with a brand.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	54	54%
Agree	22	22%
Neutral	14	14%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly disagree	3	3%

Interpretation: The findings show free samples and product trials strongly influence FMCG brand continuation. About 76% of respondents agree that trials increase their likelihood of repurchasing the same brand. Product trials reduce perceived risk and build confidence in quality. This experience encourages repeat purchases, supporting that sampling strategies help convert awareness into habitual FMCG consumption.

Q9. Discounts or loyalty rewards encourage me to stick to the same FMCG brand.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	45	45%
Agree	28	28%
Neutral	12	12%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly disagree	9	9%

Interpretation: The results show discounts and loyalty rewards strongly encourage FMCG brand loyalty. About 73% of respondents agree that incentives motivate them to continue buying the same brand. Promotions provide immediate value and reduce switching. Although a few disagree, the findings highlight that incentive-based strategies reinforce

repeat purchases and support habitual FMCG consumption.

Q10. Easy re-ordering or subscription options make me less likely to switch brands.

Categories	Responses	Response %
Strongly agree	53	53%
Agree	24	24%
Neutral	13	13%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly disagree	2	2%

Interpretation: The results show easy re-ordering and subscription options reduce FMCG brand switching. About 77% of respondents agree that convenience features make them less likely to change brands. Simplified purchasing minimizes effort and supports repeat buying. Low disagreement indicates acceptance of such models, supporting that convenience-driven strategies strengthen habitual FMCG consumption and brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate a strong relationship between modern marketing strategies and habitual FMCG consumption. A majority of respondents showed high brand recall due to continuous exposure through digital advertising, social media engagement, loyalty programs, and in-store promotions. These marketing touchpoints help reinforce routine purchasing behavior, allowing FMCG brands to integrate themselves into consumers' daily consumption patterns.

Consumers increasingly rely on familiar brands during routine purchases, reducing active comparison and strengthening repeat buying behavior. This habit-driven consumption enhances customer retention and contributes to the creation of durable brand moats in the highly competitive FMCG market. However, some respondents also indicated that factors such as price discounts, product availability, and peer influence may occasionally influence brand switching.

Overall, the study highlights that when modern marketing strategies consistently reinforce brand presence and consumer engagement, they can effectively transform awareness into habitual consumption, thereby supporting long-term competitive advantage for FMCG brands.

FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The present study aims to focus on the importance of modern marketing in the development of consumer habits and the strengthening of the moats of the brands in the FMCG industry. Future research can be conducted to further enhance this study by considering a larger sample size and including more areas or cities to increase the generalization of the study. Future research can also focus on the influence of different demographic factors in the development of consumer habits. Furthermore, the impact of new marketing tools such as the use of AI-based personalization, influencer marketing, and the use of interactive marketing tools in the strengthening of consumer habits can also be analyzed in the future. Research can also be conducted to compare the effectiveness of online marketing with offline marketing tools in the development of consumer habits. In addition, the development of consumer habits over time with the increased

exposure to marketing tools can also be observed in the future.

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