

BRAND IMAGE AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN THE PACKAGED FOOD INDUSTRY: BRAND TRUST AS A MEDIATOR

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of brand image on consumers' purchase intention in the packaged food industry, with brand trust as a mediating variable, focusing on consumers in Ernakulam district, Kerala. A quantitative descriptive research design was adopted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Primary data were collected from 160 consumers of branded packaged food products using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Convenience sampling was employed for data collection, and the responses were analysed using SPSS. Correlation, regression, and mediation analyses were conducted to examine the proposed relationships and the mediating role of brand trust. The findings indicate that brand image positively influences brand trust and consumers' purchase intention. Brand trust also contributes positively to purchase intention, highlighting its importance in consumer decision-making. The mediation findings further indicate that brand trust acts as an important mechanism through which brand image influences purchase intention. The study suggests that a favourable and consistent brand image can strengthen consumer trust and encourage purchase decisions. The findings provide useful implications for packaged food marketers to focus on product quality, transparent communication, brand credibility, and trust-building strategies to strengthen consumer relationships and support long-term competitiveness.

Keywords: Brand Image, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, Packaged Food Industry, Mediation Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, particularly the packaged food segment, is one of the most competitive industries, characterised by rapidly changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and increasing market competition (Keller, 2013). Consumers today have access to a wide range of branded products, making it essential for companies to understand the factors that influence purchasing decisions. Businesses that effectively identify and respond to customer expectations are more likely to achieve sustainable growth and maintain a competitive advantage.

Among the various factors influencing consumer behaviour, brand image plays a significant role in shaping purchase intention. A positive brand image enhances consumers' perceptions of product quality, reliability, credibility, and overall value, encouraging them to select a particular brand over competing alternatives (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Consumers are generally more inclined towards brands that they perceive as reputable, authentic, consistent, and trustworthy. Brand trust is another critical factor influencing purchase intention. Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to purchase its products, recommend them to others, and develop long-term relationships with the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001). Brand trust develops through consistent product quality, transparent communication, reliable performance, and positive customer experiences. Therefore, examining the relationship between brand image, brand trust, and purchase intention can provide useful insights into consumer decision-making.

The packaged food industry in India has experienced considerable growth due to changing lifestyles, increasing disposable income, urbanisation, and rising demand for convenient food products. These developments have intensified competition among food brands and increased the need for companies to understand consumer preferences. Although established packaged food brands may benefit from favourable reputations, consumers have numerous alternatives and can readily switch between competing brands. Consequently, brand image and brand trust may play an important role in determining consumers' willingness to purchase packaged food products. Despite the importance of these constructs, there is a need to examine whether brand image directly influences purchase intention or whether this relationship operates partly through consumers' trust in the brand. Understanding this mechanism can provide a more comprehensive explanation of consumer purchase behaviour in the packaged food sector.

Accordingly, this study examines the influence of brand image on purchase intention, with brand trust as a mediating variable, in the context of the packaged food industry. The findings may provide useful insights for marketers and packaged food companies in developing strategies aimed at strengthening brand perceptions, building consumer trust, and encouraging purchase intention.

1.1 Problem Statement

The packaged food industry is experiencing increasing competition as consumers have access to numerous brands offering similar products. Consumers may evaluate packaged food brands not only on product attributes but also on their overall perception of the brand and its credibility. Although brand image is considered important in consumer decision-making, the extent to which it translates into purchase intention requires further examination. At the same time, consumers' trust in a brand may influence how strongly brand image affects their willingness to purchase. Therefore, there is a need to examine the direct relationship between brand image and purchase intention and determine whether brand trust mediates this relationship in the packaged food industry.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on consumer behaviour within the packaged food segment of the FMCG industry. The study considers brand image, brand trust, and purchase intention as the major variables. Brand image is considered the independent variable, purchase intention is the dependent variable, and brand trust is examined as the mediating variable. The study focuses on consumers who purchase or consume branded packaged food products. The findings are intended to provide insights into how brand perceptions and consumer trust are associated with purchase intention in the packaged food market.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of brand image on brand trust and purchase intention among consumers of packaged food products.
2. To examine the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention in the packaged food industry.

1.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework of this study proposes that brand image (independent variable) influences purchase intention (dependent variable), with brand trust acting as a mediating variable. The framework is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note. IV = Independent Variable; DV = Dependent Variable; Mediator = Brand Trust.

1.5 Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Brand Image has a significant positive influence on Brand Trust in the packaged food industry.
- **H2:** Brand Trust has a significant positive influence on Purchase Intention in the packaged food industry.
- **H3:** Brand Image has a significant positive influence on Purchase Intention in the packaged food industry.
- **H4:** Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention in the packaged food industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image reflects the associations and perceptions that consumers form about a brand, which shape how they evaluate and respond to it. Short-form video content on platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts has become an important vehicle for building and reinforcing these associations. Aarthi and Rukmani (2025) examined the impact of short video content marketing on consumers' purchasing decisions, focusing specifically on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, and demonstrated that engaging short-form videos can positively influence purchasing behaviour by shaping favourable brand perceptions.

Ananda and Halim (2022) investigated the impact of Reels video marketing on customers' purchase intention and found that elements such as scenario-based experience, user participation, perceived benefits, perceived enjoyment, and celebrity involvement positively affect consumer brand attitudes, which in turn drive purchase intention. Interesting content alone did not show a direct significant effect on brand attitudes, underscoring the importance of interactive and benefit-oriented features in forming positive brand images through Reels.

Bikowski (2023) synthesised research on short-form video marketing and brand engagement, identifying mechanisms including rapid attention capture, entertainment-led processing, authenticity signalling, interactive participation, creator mediation, and algorithmic circulation. These mechanisms help brands shape meaning, generate visibility, and foster cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, thereby strengthening brand image in digital environments.

2.2 Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

Brand trust develops when consumers perceive a brand as reliable and capable of delivering on its promises, which increases their willingness to purchase and remain loyal. Luo et al. (2025) examined the influence of short video content on consumers' purchase intentions on social media platforms, with trust as a mediator. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, they showed that the usefulness, ease of use, and entertainment value of short-form video content significantly affect consumers' trust and purchase intention. Consumer trust positively influences purchase intention and mediates the relationship between short video content and purchase behaviour.

Woo and Suessmair (2024) studied purchase intention and attitudes toward advertisements on Instagram Stories. Their experimental findings indicated that products advertised in a context-based setting positively affect consumer attitudes toward the advertisement and purchase intention. Source credibility mediated positive consumer responses, highlighting the role of perceived trustworthiness in converting ad exposure into purchase intention.

Nusir et al. (2026) explored algorithmic trust, privacy calculus, and purchase intention in the context of generative AI-personalised social commerce, showing how trust in algorithmic systems influences purchase decisions when AI-driven personalisation is involved.

2.3 Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention

Research on short-form video and social media marketing consistently links brand perceptions, trust, and purchase intention. Luo et al. (2025) demonstrated that short video content dimensions (usefulness, ease of use, and entertainment) build consumer trust, which then mediates effects on purchase intention. Ananda and Halim (2022) showed that Reels marketing elements influence brand attitudes, which subsequently affect purchase intention, illustrating an indirect pathway through brand-related perceptions.

Bikowski (2023) highlighted how short-form video strengthens brand engagement through authenticity and interactive mechanisms, which contribute to more favourable brand images and stronger relational bonds that support purchase behaviour. Talreja and Chaturvedi (2024) examined the role of social media influencers in advertising cosmetic brands on Instagram and found that influencers significantly persuade consumers to purchase, particularly when they explain products well, offer promotions, or personally use the brands, thereby enhancing both brand image and trust.

Hoang et al. (2026) investigated AI-driven personalised advertisements on social media and purchase intention in the fashion industry, while Molem et al. (2024) explored how short videos on TikTok and Instagram Reels influence viewers' perspectives, both contributing evidence that platform-native short content shapes attitudes and behavioural intentions. Collectively, these studies indicate that effective short-form video and influencer content can improve brand image, foster trust, and elevate purchase intention, with trust frequently operating as a key mediating mechanism.

2.4 Research Gap

The reviewed literature indicates that brand image and brand trust are important factors influencing consumers' purchase intention. Previous studies have established that a positive brand image creates favourable perceptions, while brand trust strengthens consumers' confidence in a brand and can influence their purchasing decisions. However, limited research has examined the influence of brand image on purchase intention with brand trust as a mediating variable, particularly in the context of the packaged food industry. Therefore, the present study aims to examine these relationships and address the identified research gap.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine consumers' perceptions and purchasing behaviour towards branded packaged food products. The study was conducted in Ernakulam district, Kerala, which is the economic hub of the State and a key point of trade. Ernakulam's diverse consumer base, high retail density, and strong presence of organised supermarkets and e-commerce platforms make it an ideal setting for examining brand-related consumer behaviour. A quantitative research approach was employed to systematically collect and analyse data on brand image, brand trust, and purchase intention. The population of the study comprised consumers of branded packaged food products in Ernakulam district, and convenience sampling was used to select respondents based on accessibility and willingness to participate. A total of 160 valid responses were collected for analysis, providing a suitable sample for the statistical procedures employed in the study.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, with statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree, while secondary data were gathered from books, journals, company reports, websites, and previous research studies. Data analysis was performed using SPSS, employing percentage analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4). The study is subject to certain limitations, including its reliance on a specific sample of respondents, possible response bias arising from self-reported perceptions, and constraints related to time and resources. Furthermore, the research focuses only on selected variables influencing purchase intention and does not encompass all factors that may affect consumer behaviour in the packaged food industry.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	36.25
	Female	102	63.75
Age	18–25 years	69	43.13
	26–35 years	50	31.25
	36–45 years	33	20.63
	46–55 years	0	0.00
	56 years and above	8	5.00
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	28	17.50
	₹20,001–₹40,000	40	25.00
	₹40,001–₹60,000	35	21.88
	₹60,001–₹1,00,000	45	28.13
Occupation	Above ₹1,00,000	12	7.50
	Student	41	25.63

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Purchase Frequency	Employed – Private	55	34.38
	Employed – Government	24	15.00
	Self-employed	28	17.50
	Homemaker	12	7.50
	Rarely	34	21.25
	Sometimes	56	35.00
	Often	35	21.88
	Very Often	16	10.00
	Always	19	11.88

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 160)

Note. N = 160.

The demographic analysis revealed that female respondents constituted the majority of the sample (63.75%), while males accounted for 36.25%. The largest age group was 18–25 years (43.13%), followed by 26–35 years (31.25%). In terms of monthly income, the highest proportion of respondents (28.13%) reported earning between ₹60,001 and ₹1,00,000. Private-sector employees formed the largest occupational group (34.38%), followed by students (25.63%). Regarding purchasing behaviour, most respondents reported buying packaged food products "sometimes" (35.00%), suggesting a moderate but regular level of engagement with the brand.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	M	SD
1. Brand Image	2.0813	.82547
2. Brand Trust	2.1325	.83835
3. Purchase Intention	2.1675	.85822

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 160)

Note. M stands for mean and SD for standard deviation. N = 160. Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.

The mean values indicate that respondents generally agreed with statements related to brand image (M = 2.08), brand trust (M = 2.13), and purchase intention (M = 2.17). The standard deviation values indicate moderate variation in responses among respondents.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Variable	BI_MEAN	BT_MEAN	PI_MEAN
BI_MEAN	1.000	.867**	.848**
BT_MEAN	.867**	1.000	.885**
PI_MEAN	.848**	.885**	1.000

Table 3. Correlations Among Study Variables

Note. N = 160. BI = Brand Image; BT = Brand Trust; PI = Purchase Intention.

**p < .001 (1-tailed).

The correlation analysis shows strong positive relationships among the variables. Brand Image has a strong positive correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = .848$, $p < .001$), while Brand Trust also shows a strong positive correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = .885$, $p < .001$). Brand Image and Brand Trust are also strongly correlated ($r = .867$, $p < .001$). This indicates that improvements in brand image and brand trust are associated with higher purchase intention.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.848	.719	.717	.45123	405.876	1	158	.000

Table 4. Model Summary for Regression Analysis (Brand Image Predicting Purchase Intention)

Note. Predictor: (Constant), Brand Image. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention.

The model summary indicates that the correlation between brand image and purchase intention is .848, showing a strong relationship. The R^2 value of .719 indicates that 71.9% of the variation in purchase intention is explained by brand image. The remaining 28.1% is explained by other factors not included in the model.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.645	1	82.645	405.876	.000
Residual	32.176	158	.204		
Total	114.821	159			

Table 5. ANOVA for Regression Analysis

Note. Predictor: (Constant), Brand Image. Deendent Variable: Purchase Intention.

The ANOVA result shows that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(1, 158) = 405.876, p < .001$). This confirms that brand image significantly predicts purchase intention.

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.348	.098		3.551	.000
Brand Image	.857	.043	.848	20.146	.000

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

Note. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention.

The coefficient results indicate that brand image has a significant positive influence on purchase intention ($\beta = .848, p < .001$). This supports H3, which proposed that brand image has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

4.5 Mediation Analysis

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Brand Image	.881	.040	21.87	< .001	[.802, .961]

Table 7. Regression Analysis of Brand Image Predicting Brand Trust (Mediator Model)

Note. $R = .867, R^2 = .752, F(1, 158) = 478.29, p < .001$.

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Brand Image	.454	.078	5.86	< .001	[.301, .607]
Brand Trust	.462	.076	6.06	< .001	[.312, .613]

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Brand Image and Brand Trust Predicting Purchase Intention (Outcome Model)

Note. $R = .879, R^2 = .773, F(2, 157) = 267.34, p < .001$.

Effect	Effect	SE	t	p	95% CI
Total Effect (c)	.862	.043	20.15	< .001	[.777, .946]
Direct Effect (c')	.454	.078	5.86	< .001	[.301, .607]
Indirect Effect (a × b)	.407	.111	—	—	[.182, .613]

Table 9. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Brand Image on Purchase Intention Through Brand Trust

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. CI = confidence interval.

A mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 4 to examine the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention. The results showed that brand image significantly predicted brand trust ($B = 0.881$, $SE = 0.040$, $t(158) = 21.87$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.802, 0.961]). The mediator model was statistically significant, $F(1, 158) = 478.29$, $p < .001$, explaining 75.2% of the variance in brand trust ($R = .867$, $R^2 = .752$).

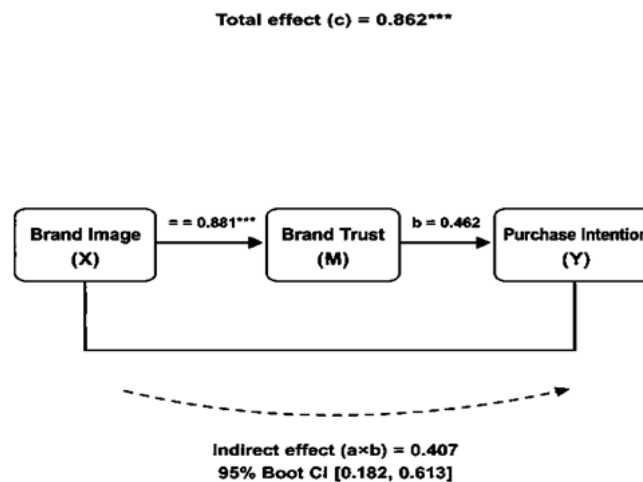


Figure 2 Path Diagram

When brand image and brand trust were included together as predictors of purchase intention, both variables showed significant positive effects. Brand image had a significant direct effect on purchase intention ($B = 0.454$, $SE = 0.078$, $t(157) = 5.86$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.301, 0.607]). Similarly, brand trust significantly predicted purchase intention ($B = 0.462$, $SE = 0.076$, $t(157) = 6.06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.312, 0.613]). The outcome model was significant, $F(2, 157) = 267.34$, $p < .001$, explaining 77.3% of the variance in purchase intention ($R = .879$, $R^2 = .773$).

The total effect of brand image on purchase intention was significant ($B = 0.862$, $SE = 0.043$, $t(158) = 20.15$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.777, 0.946]). The indirect effect of brand image on purchase intention through brand trust was also significant ($B = 0.407$, $BootSE = 0.111$, 95% Boot CI [0.182, 0.613]). Since the bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero, the mediation effect was statistically significant. The findings indicate that brand trust partially mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention. Therefore, H4 was supported.

Hypothesis	Path	Result	Supported
H1	BI → BT	B = .881, p < .001	Yes
H2	BT → PI	B = .462, p < .001	Yes
H3	BI → PI	β = .848, p < .001	Yes
H4	BI → BT → PI	Indirect effect = .407, 95% CI [.182, .613]	Yes

Table 10. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Note. BI = Brand Image; BT = Brand Trust; PI = Purchase Intention.

Table 10 shows that all four proposed hypotheses were supported by the study findings. Brand image positively influences brand trust, indicating that a favourable brand perception strengthens consumer trust. Brand trust positively influences purchase intention, suggesting that trusted brands are more likely to be considered for purchase. Brand image also has a positive influence on purchase intention, highlighting its importance in consumer decision-making. The mediation result confirms that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention, indicating both direct and indirect influence.

6. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the influence of brand image on purchase intention in the packaged food industry, with brand trust as a mediating variable. The findings provided support for all four hypotheses and highlight the importance of brand-related perceptions in consumer decision-making. Brand image was found to positively influence brand trust, suggesting that consumers are more likely to trust packaged food brands that are perceived as reputable, authentic, reliable, and consistent. Brand trust also positively influenced purchase intention, indicating that consumers are more willing to purchase brands that they consider dependable and trustworthy. Brand image was also found to positively influence purchase intention, demonstrating that favourable perceptions of a brand can encourage consumers to select it over competing alternatives. These findings are consistent with Konuk (2018), Sukma et al. (2024), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2001), and Prentice et al. (2022).

The findings further indicate that brand trust plays an important mediating role between brand image and purchase intention. This suggests that a favourable brand image can encourage purchase intention not only directly but also by strengthening consumers' trust in the brand. Theoretically, the study extends brand equity and brand trust perspectives to the packaged food industry. From a practical perspective, packaged food marketers should develop a strong and consistent brand image through product quality, authentic positioning, and effective communication. Companies should also strengthen consumer trust through transparent information, reliable product performance, and consistent fulfilment of brand promises.

7. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that brand image positively influences consumers' purchase intention in the packaged food industry, with brand trust playing a significant mediating role. The findings highlight the importance of developing a strong brand identity, maintaining consistent product quality, and building consumer trust through transparent communication. These practices can strengthen consumer relationships, encourage repeat purchases, and support the competitive position of packaged food companies. This research was limited to the packaged food industry and may not be generalisable to other FMCG sectors or consumer groups. The study also focuses on selected variables, while other factors may influence

consumers' purchase decisions. Future research could examine factors such as perceived quality, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and perceived value across different FMCG categories and demographic groups. Longitudinal and comparative studies across regions and product categories could further provide broader insights into the changing relationship between brand image, brand trust, and purchase intention.

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