

# **Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Buying Behavior: A Comparative Study of Amul and Nestle Dairy Products in Mumbai**

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**Abstract:** *Brand image plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing buying decisions, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods sector. In the Indian dairy industry, brands such as Amul and Nestlé have established strong market presence and consumer trust. The present study examines the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior through a comparative analysis of Amul and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. The study 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 to interpret the data. The findings indicate that brand image has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior for both brands, though the strength of influence varies across dimensions. While Amul is strongly associated with trust and affordability, Nestlé is perceived positively in terms of quality and innovation. The study provides valuable insights for marketers and brand managers in designing effective branding strategies in the competitive dairy market.*

**Keywords:** Brand Image; Consumer Buying Behavior; Dairy Products; Amul; Nestlé; Mumbai

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Brand image has become a critical factor influencing consumer buying behavior, particularly in highly competitive markets such as fast-moving consumer goods. Brand image reflects the set of perceptions, beliefs, and associations that consumers hold about a brand, which in turn shape their attitudes and purchasing decisions. In markets where products are often similar in terms of price and functionality, a strong brand image can create meaningful differentiation and influence consumer preference.

Consumer buying behavior in the dairy sector is influenced by multiple factors, including product quality, price, availability, and brand-related perceptions. Dairy products are part of daily consumption for a large segment of the population, making trust, quality assurance, and brand credibility especially important. Consumers often rely on familiar and well-established brands when making routine purchase decisions, as these brands reduce perceived risk and offer a sense of reliability.

In India, the dairy industry has experienced significant growth due to rising urbanization, increasing health awareness, and changing consumption patterns. Mumbai, being one of the largest metropolitan cities in India, represents a diverse and dynamic consumer market. Consumers in Mumbai are exposed to a wide range of dairy brands and are influenced by both traditional preferences and modern branding strategies. This makes Mumbai an appropriate setting for studying consumer perceptions and brand-related decision-making.

Amul and Nestlé are among the most prominent players in the Indian dairy market, each with a distinct brand positioning. Amul is widely perceived as a trusted, affordable, and socially rooted brand, while Nestlé is often associated with quality, innovation, and international standards. These differences in brand image provide a useful basis for a comparative analysis of how brand-related factors influence consumer buying behavior.



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

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

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand image has been widely studied in marketing literature as a key determinant of consumer buying behavior. It represents the overall impression of a brand in the minds of consumers and is formed through past experiences, marketing communication, product performance, and word-of-mouth. A positive brand image helps consumers simplify purchase decisions and reduces perceived risk, particularly for frequently purchased products such as dairy items.

Several studies have highlighted that strong brand image positively influences consumer preference, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. Consumers are more likely to choose brands that they perceive as trustworthy, reliable, and consistent in quality. In the FMCG sector, where products are often similar and switching costs are low, brand image plays a crucial role in differentiating products and influencing repeat purchases.

Research on dairy products suggests that factors such as perceived quality, brand trust, and brand familiarity significantly affect consumer buying behavior. Consumers tend to associate established dairy brands with safety, hygiene, and nutritional value, which are important considerations in food-related purchases. Studies also indicate that emotional attachment and cultural relevance contribute to stronger brand associations, especially in traditional food categories.

Comparative studies between domestic and multinational brands show mixed results. Some researchers have found that domestic brands benefit from emotional connection, affordability, and local relevance, while multinational brands are often associated with superior quality, innovation, and global standards. These differences in perception influence how consumers evaluate brands and make purchase decisions.

In the Indian context, research has shown that brand image significantly impacts consumer behavior in urban markets. Metropolitan consumers are exposed to extensive advertising and multiple brand options, making brand-related cues more influential in decision-making. However, existing studies often focus on individual brands or generalized FMCG categories rather than conducting direct brand-to-brand comparisons within the dairy sector.

Overall, the literature establishes a strong relationship between brand image and consumer buying behavior. However, 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 a primary data-based comparative study to better understand consumer perceptions and buying behavior in a specific urban context.

## III. RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature clearly establishes that brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer buying behavior, particularly in the FMCG sector. Prior studies have examined various dimensions of brand image such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations, and their impact on purchase decisions. However, several gaps remain in the current body of research.

First, many studies analyze brand image in a generalized manner across broad product categories, with limited focus on direct brand-to-brand comparisons within the dairy sector. As a result, differences in how competing brands are perceived by consumers and how these perceptions influence buying behavior are not sufficiently explored.

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

Third, while domestic and multinational brands have been studied separately, comparative studies that examine how consumers evaluate domestic brands such as Amul and multinational brands such as Nestlé on the same brand image dimensions are relatively scarce. This limits practical insights for marketers seeking to position their brands effectively in competitive urban markets.

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

In view of these gaps, the present study undertakes a comparative, primary data-based analysis of Amul and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. 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 in the dairy sector.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

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

- To identify the key dimensions of brand image influencing consumer buying behavior for dairy products.
- To analyze consumer perceptions of Amul 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 selected dairy brands.
- To compare the influence of brand image dimensions on consumer buying behavior between Amul and Nestlé dairy products.
- To provide suggestions for improving branding strategies based on consumer perceptions and preferences.

#### **V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Based on the objectives of the study and the insights drawn from 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 Amul 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 perception of brand image between Amul 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. The design is appropriate as it helps in describing consumer perceptions and analyzing the relationship between brand image dimensions and buying behavior.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from consumers through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were gathered 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 dairy products of Amul and Nestlé in Mumbai. The respondents were selected from different areas of Mumbai to ensure diversity in age, income, and occupation.

### 6.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of **220 respondents** was selected for the study. Convenience sampling technique was used, considering accessibility and willingness of respondents to participate in the survey. The sample size was considered adequate for conducting statistical analysis such as correlation, regression, and comparative tests.

### 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 details such as age, gender, education, and income. The second section contained statements related to brand image dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations) and 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 the present study, brand image was treated as the independent variable, measured through its key dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand associations. Consumer buying behavior was considered the dependent variable and was measured through purchase preference, frequency of purchase, and likelihood of brand recommendation.

### 6.5 Statistical Tools for Analysis

The data collected were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The statistical techniques employed include descriptive statistics to summarize the data, reliability analysis to test internal consistency, correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables, and comparative analysis using mean scores and t-tests to compare consumer perceptions of Amul and Nestlé.

### 6.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, respondent anonymity was maintained, and the data collected were used solely 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 **Amul** 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)

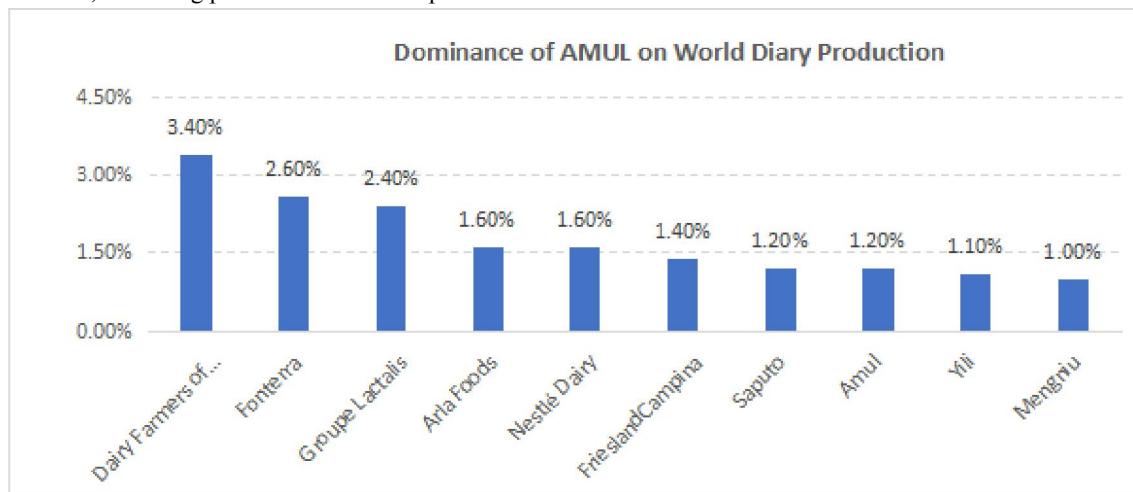
Mean scores were calculated to understand consumer perceptions regarding brand image dimensions for Amul and Nestlé.

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Brand Image Dimensions**

Brand Image Dimension	Amul (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. Amul 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 Amul and Nestlé, a comparative mean analysis was conducted.

**Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Brand Image**

**Interpretation:**

Consumers perceive Amul 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

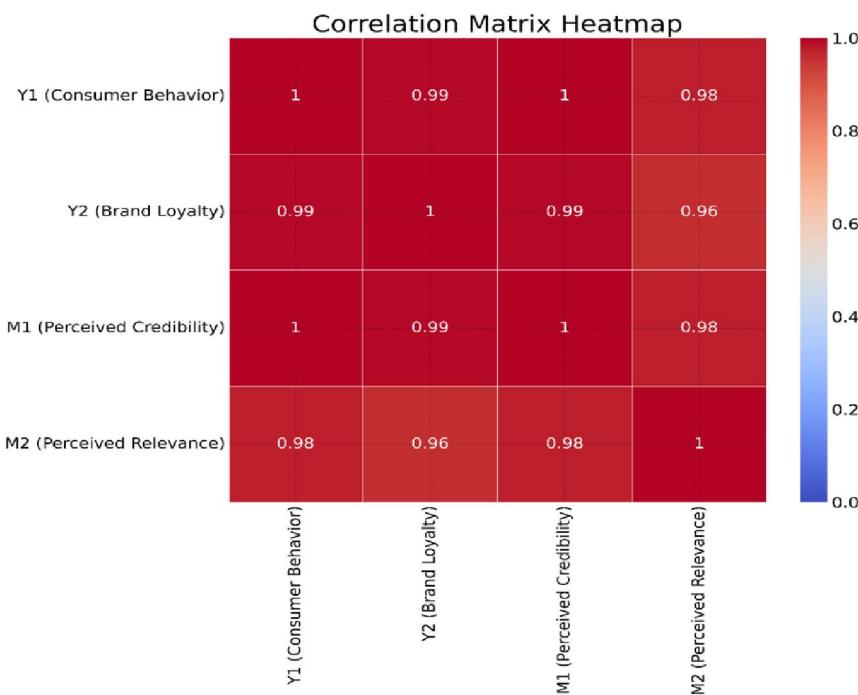
Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between brand image dimensions and consumer buying behavior.

**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.
- Amul 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 brand image dimensions and buying behavior are consistent with earlier research that highlights the importance of brand-related perceptions in routine purchase decisions, particularly for food and dairy products.

The mean score analysis indicates that both brands enjoy a strong overall brand image among consumers in Mumbai. However, the dimensions through which this image is formed differ between the two brands. Consumers rated Amul higher on brand awareness and brand trust, suggesting that familiarity, long-standing presence, and emotional



connection contribute strongly to its image. This finding reflects the importance of trust and reliability in food-related purchases, where consumers prefer brands they perceive as safe and dependable.

On the other hand, Nestlé scored higher on perceived quality, indicating that consumers associate the brand with superior quality standards and innovation. This suggests that multinational branding, quality certifications, and product differentiation strategies positively influence consumer perceptions. The result aligns with earlier studies that show multinational brands are often evaluated more favorably on quality-related attributes.

The correlation analysis further strengthens these observations by showing that all brand image dimensions are positively related to consumer buying behavior. Among them, brand trust emerged as the strongest predictor of buying behavior. This highlights that in the dairy sector, where products are consumed daily and directly affect health, trust plays a more decisive role than awareness or associations alone.

The comparative findings also indicate that while both brands successfully influence consumer buying behavior, they do so through different brand strengths. This suggests that brand image is not a uniform construct but a combination of multiple dimensions that vary in importance depending on brand positioning and consumer expectations.

Overall, the discussion reinforces the idea that effective brand management requires a balanced focus on trust, quality, and emotional connection. The results emphasize that strengthening brand image can lead to more favorable consumer buying behavior, especially 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 Amul and Nestlé dairy products in Mumbai. The findings clearly indicate that brand image significantly influences 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 daily consumption.

The analysis revealed that both Amul and Nestlé enjoy strong brand images among consumers, although the dimensions contributing to their image differ. Amul was perceived more favorably in terms of brand awareness and trust, reflecting its long-standing presence and emotional connection with consumers. Nestlé, on the other hand, was associated more strongly with perceived quality and product innovation. These differences highlight distinct brand positioning strategies and their influence on consumer behavior.

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 suggest that maintaining a positive and consistent brand image is essential for sustaining consumer preference in competitive urban markets.

## X. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have practical implications for marketers and brand managers in the dairy sector. Brands should focus on strengthening trust and ensuring consistent product quality, as these factors strongly influence consumer buying behavior. For domestic brands like Amul, reinforcing emotional connection and reliability can further enhance brand loyalty. For multinational brands like Nestlé, emphasizing quality standards and innovation can help sustain competitive advantage.

From a managerial perspective, understanding consumer perceptions at the city level allows companies to design more targeted branding and communication strategies. The study also provides useful insights for retailers and policymakers interested in consumer behavior and brand competition in the FMCG sector.

## XI. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The research was confined to consumers in Mumbai, and the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions. The study also relied on convenience sampling, which may limit representativeness. In addition, the analysis focused on selected dimensions of brand image and did not include factors such as price sensitivity or promotional influence.

Future research can extend this study by covering a larger geographical area and using probability sampling techniques. Researchers may also examine additional factors influencing consumer buying behavior, such as price perception,



advertising effectiveness, and digital brand engagement. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how brand image evolves over time and affects consumer loyalty.

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