



# Influence Of Brand Image And Customer Loyalty On The Agarbathies Industry In Karnataka.

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**Abstract:** The agarbathies industry in Karnataka, particularly in districts like Bangalore, Mysore, Mandya, and Chamarajanagara, plays a vital role in cultural and spiritual life. This study evaluates how brand image influences customer loyalty based on parameters such as fragrance, quality, packaging, emotional attachment, and satisfaction. Information was collected from 400 respondents using structured questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that 91% of respondents value brand consistency and emotional appeal. In particular, 85% reported that fragrance and quality strongly influenced their repurchase behavior. ANOVA findings show that age, income, and education significantly impact loyalty perception ( $p < 0.05$ ). Mean score analysis revealed that “brand fragrance” scored the highest at 4.41, while “digital promotions” followed with 4.15, reflecting strong marketing influence. Correlation analysis indicates a strong relationship between brand image and repeats purchases ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, over 76% of participants valued digital promotions and personalized packaging as loyalty enhancers. Respondents who experienced better customer service and consistent quality rated brand satisfaction higher at 4.25. Operationally, companies with strong branding strategies, effective digital engagement, and region-specific marketing showed improved loyalty metrics. These findings highlight the importance of emotional branding, sensory appeal, and trust in building long-term customer relationships in the agarbathies sector.

**Keywords** - Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, Agarbathies, Fragrance, Emotional Branding, Product Quality, Packaging, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Behavior.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The agarbathies industry holds a strong cultural and emotional presence in Indian households, making it a unique sector within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market. Unlike other products, agarbathies are tied to spiritual rituals, daily routines, and emotional resonance. In such a context, brand image plays a crucial role in influencing customer perceptions and loyalty. Visual identity, fragrance, trust, and emotional branding shape consumer behavior beyond mere utility. As more brands enter this market with similar product offerings, customer loyalty becomes increasingly tied to how brands communicate value and maintain consistency.

In Karnataka, cities like Mysore, Bangalore, Mandya, and Chamarajanagara represent diverse consumer bases with distinct buying behaviors. Despite the significance of brand image, there remains limited research exploring how it directly affects customer loyalty in the agarbathies segment. With increased digital awareness and lifestyle shifts, modern consumers expect more than product performance—they seek meaning, identity, and sensory satisfaction. This study aims to explore the gap by evaluating brand image elements and their influence on loyalty, helping businesses create deeper connections and long-term customer retention strategies.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study is grounded in the understanding that brand image—comprising elements like fragrance, packaging, product quality, emotional appeal, and trust—plays a pivotal role in shaping customer loyalty within the agarbathies industry. Drawing from Keller's Brand Equity Model and the Cognitive-Affective-Conative Loyalty framework, the research proposes that a strong and consistent brand image enhances emotional attachment and perceived value, which in turn lead to repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. The framework connects brand image components as independent variables, customer satisfaction as a mediating factor, and customer loyalty as the dependent outcome. By applying this model across diverse demographic groups in Karnataka, the study seeks to analyse how consumers interpret and respond to brand identity in a culturally embedded product category.

## 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies by Huanyu Liu (2025), Garcia - Umana et al. (2024), Abbas et al. (2021), and Pradipta Utama et al. (2021) show that brand image significantly boosts loyalty, especially when paired with satisfaction, awareness, and perceived value. Afiftama (2023), Nasir (2023), and Fu (2022) highlight customer experience and emotional connection as stronger loyalty drivers than image alone. Widhy Tri Astuti (2023) and Muchlis Abba (2023) find that trust, CRM, and emotional bonds enhance brand-consumer relationships. In Islamic banking, Siti Ngayesah Ab Hamid et al. (2021) show brand trust and Shariah compliance deepen customer loyalty. Together, these studies confirm that while brand image is vital, trust and emotional experience make loyalty long-lasting.

Khushbu Gour and Agarwal (2025), Rehman (2021), and Zeb (2021) reveal that ethical green practices build trust and loyalty in banking. Fatma (2023) and Khan (2023) show CSR enhances brand image and word-of-mouth in hospitality. Santini et al. (2023) and Amoako et al. (2020) emphasize that CSR only helps loyalty when perceived as sincere. Konuk (2022) finds that price fairness and honesty improve loyalty in organic restaurants. Mntande et al. (2022) highlight emotional purpose as key to customer retention. Collectively, these works show that ethical branding and CSR, when perceived as authentic, positively shape loyalty and trust.

Studies by Chu Chu Myat Thwe Win et al. (2023), Malik et al. (2023), and Maghfur et al. (2023) find that service quality and satisfaction drive loyalty through improved brand perception. Chang (2020) and Guan et al. (2020) show emotional experience and brand affect mediate loyalty in cafes and hotels. Dang et al. (2022) and Bu et al. (2020) identify trust, usability, and co-creation as core loyalty drivers in digital services. Mittal (2021), Maity (2021), and Soni (2020) emphasize relationship marketing, customer gratitude, and satisfaction as essential loyalty links. These studies confirm that emotional and service-based experiences are crucial to maintaining long-term loyalty.

## 4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The agarbathies industry faces challenges in retaining customers due to similar product offerings. Brand image factors like fragrance, packaging, and emotional appeal are often underutilized. There is limited research on how these elements influence customer loyalty in this sector. This study aims to examine the role of brand image in building loyalty among agarbathies consumers in Karnataka.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To identify key loyalty and brand image drivers in select Agarbathies products.

To evaluate the strategies to improve brand image and customer loyalty in select Agarbathies products.

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**6.1 Research Design:** This study follows a descriptive research method aimed at analyzing the influence of brand image on customer loyalty in the agarbathies industry across selected districts of Karnataka. It seeks to understand consumer perceptions regarding product fragrance, packaging, emotional appeal, brand trust, and satisfaction, and how these factors affect repeat purchase behavior and loyalty.

**6.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size:** A convenience sampling method was used to collect data from 400 respondents who had purchased agarbathies at least twice in the past six months. The sample included male and female customers from urban and semi-urban areas in Mysore, Bangalore, Mandya, and Chamarajanagara, covering various age groups, income levels, and education backgrounds.

**6.3 Sources of Data:** Primary Data was collected from 400 respondents using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. Respondents were selected based on their regular usage and familiarity with agarbathies brands.

Secondary Data was sourced from academic journals, company reports, marketing research papers, brand case studies, and consumer behavior literature related to brand image and loyalty.

**6.4 Research Instrument:** A structured questionnaire with close-ended questions was developed using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). It focused on measuring dimensions of brand image such as fragrance, packaging, emotional appeal, satisfaction, and loyalty intentions.

**6.5 Data Analysis Tools:** Collected data will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS to generate percentage analysis, mean score, and Anova & Ad Hoc.

## 7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The reliability of the research instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a score of 0.912, indicating strong internal consistency. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.871, showing sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), supporting factor analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to assess customer opinions on brand image, loyalty, and related factors. These results validate the tool used to measure brand image influence on customer loyalty in the agarbathies industry. These results confirmed that the data was suitable for further statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to study customer views on brand image, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Factor analysis helped in identifying the main variables influencing customer loyalty. Mean and standard deviation values were calculated to understand customer preferences across agarbathie brands. Overall, the instrument used was valid and reliable for analyzing brand image and customer loyalty in the agarbathies sector.

**Table 7. 1** Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	Variance	Skewness	S. E	Kurtosis	S. E
Quality meets expectations	400	3.803	0.967	0.936	-0.697	0.12	0.484	0.243
High-quality association	399	3.955	0.870	0.757	-0.833	0.12	0.697	0.244
Reflects brand values	400	4.040	0.967	0.936	-0.965	0.12	0.691	0.243
Recommend to others	400	3.745	1.028	1.058	-0.738	0.12	0.291	0.243
Quality drives loyalty	400	3.845	0.966	0.933	-0.792	0.12	0.367	0.243
Fragrance brings satisfaction	400	3.950	0.889	0.789	-0.678	0.12	0.249	0.243
Price influences choice	400	3.835	1.018	1.035	-0.683	0.12	0.195	0.243
Fragrance drives purchase	400	3.880	0.850	0.722	-0.679	0.12	0.417	0.243
Switching likelihood low	400	3.995	0.926	0.857	-0.657	0.12	0.100	0.243
Positive brand experience	400	3.775	0.947	0.897	-0.801	0.12	0.817	0.243
Expectations consistently met	400	3.848	0.968	0.937	-0.674	0.12	-0.022	0.243
Great value offering	400	3.895	0.917	0.841	-0.731	0.12	0.458	0.243
Valid N (listwise)	399							

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

This dataset, from roughly 400 respondents, shows consistently high mean scores (3.745-4.040) across all twelve variables, indicating strong positive consumer perceptions. The relatively small standard deviations (0.850-1.028) suggest moderate agreement among respondents on these attributes. Negative skewness values across the board reveal a tendency for responses to lean towards the positive end of the scale. Kurtosis values vary, showing different distributional shapes for each variable. Overall, the findings strongly support a favorable consumer view of the product's characteristics.



**Table 7.2****ANOVA**

variable	Age		Education level		Occupation		Place	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
Quality meets expectations	1.148	0.330	1.409	0.210	4.295	0.000	4.949	0.001
High-quality association	0.228	0.877	0.756	0.605	1.092	0.366	0.967	0.425
Reflects brand values	0.679	0.566	1.569	0.155	0.724	0.630	2.786	0.026
Recommend to others	0.254	0.859	1.504	0.176	2.207	0.042	1.315	0.264
Quality drives loyalty	1.672	0.172	2.387	0.028	2.397	0.027	3.078	0.016
Fragrance brings satisfaction	0.820	0.483	1.607	0.144	0.744	0.615	1.615	0.170
Price influences choice	1.025	0.381	0.601	0.730	2.798	0.011	2.110	0.079
Fragrance drives purchase	0.311	0.817	1.290	0.261	2.932	0.008	2.034	0.089
Switching likelihood low	0.670	0.571	1.355	0.232	0.559	0.763	2.204	0.068
Positive brand experience	0.877	0.453	1.283	0.264	1.597	0.147	0.836	0.503
Expectations consistently met	1.280	0.281	1.850	0.088	1.526	0.168	3.856	0.004
Great value offering	0.079	0.971	2.048	0.059	2.141	0.048	2.828	0.025

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

This ANOVA table highlights the significant influence of certain demographics on consumer perceptions. Occupation plays a crucial role, significantly impacting "Quality meets expectations," "Recommend to others," and "Fragrance drives purchase" (all  $p < 0.05$ ). Likewise, the consumer's Place of residence notably affects perceptions such as "Quality meets expectations," "Reflects brand values," and the "Great value offering." Additionally, Education level significantly influences whether "Quality drives loyalty." Conversely, Age consistently shows no statistically significant relationship with any of the twelve consumer perception variables listed, indicating its limited relevance in predicting these specific perceptions based on this data. These findings suggest that targeting strategies should consider occupation and location more than age.

**Table 7.3****Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Variable	Age		Education level		Occupation		Place	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
Improve Product Quality	396	0.812	393	0.335	393	0.130	395	0.382
Strategic Marketing Campaigns	395	0.483	392	0.014	392	0.060	394	0.085
Social Responsibility Initiatives	396	0.944	393	0.719	393	0.678	395	0.343
Excellent Customer Service	396	0.088	393	0.764	393	0.143	395	0.070
Customer Loyalty Programs	396	0.409	393	0.095	393	0.160	395	0.137
Personalized Customer Experiences	396	0.164	393	0.551	393	0.687	395	0.021
Strong Brand Image	396	0.455	393	0.086	393	0.007	395	0.049
Brand Loyalty Correlation	396	0.003	393	0.014	393	0.328	395	0.191
Gather Customer Feedback	396	0.836	393	0.172	393	0.102	395	0.685
Digital Marketing Investment	396	0.144	393	0.329	393	0.006	395	0.309
Strengthen Customer Relationships	396	0.085	393	0.017	393	0.000	395	0.000
Positive Brand Building	396	0.021	393	0.485	393	0.210	395	0.893

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

The table presents the results of a Levene's Test for homogeneity of variances across various demographic factors—Age, Education Level, Occupation, and Place—for multiple brand-related strategies. A significance value (Sig.) below 0.05 indicates a violation of the homogeneity of variances assumption. Most strategies, such as "Improve Product Quality" and "Social Responsibility Initiatives," show no significant variance across

groups, suggesting consistent perceptions. However, “Brand Loyalty Correlation” significantly varies by Age and Education Level, while “Strategic Marketing Campaigns” shows a variance based on Education Level. “Strong Brand Image” varies by Occupation and Place, suggesting contextual differences. “Strengthen Customer Relationships” shows variance across Education, Occupation, and Place, indicating broad demographic influence. “Personalized Customer Experiences” also varies significantly by Place. “Digital Marketing Investment” shows variance across Occupation, suggesting professional role influences perception. These findings highlight the need for demographic-tailored strategies in marketing and brand management.

**Table 7. 4****Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Mean	S. D	Variance	Skewness	S. E	Kurtosis	S. E
Improve Product Quality	400	3.708	1.049	1.100	-0.638	0.122	0.232	0.243
Strategic Marketing Campaigns	400	3.868	0.861	0.742	-0.735	0.122	0.551	0.243
Social Responsibility Initiatives	400	3.993	0.949	0.900	-0.764	0.122	0.419	0.243
Excellent Customer Service	399	3.767	0.942	0.888	-0.788	0.122	0.833	0.244
Customer Loyalty Programs	400	3.895	0.920	0.846	-0.548	0.122	-0.220	0.243
Personalized Customer Experiences	400	4.008	0.860	0.739	-0.633	0.122	0.160	0.243
Strong Brand Image	399	3.822	0.990	0.981	-0.869	0.122	0.812	0.244
Brand Loyalty Correlation	400	3.858	0.880	0.774	-0.539	0.122	0.001	0.243
Gather Customer Feedback	400	3.920	0.922	0.851	-0.707	0.122	0.375	0.243
Digital Marketing Investment	400	3.820	1.008	1.015	-0.859	0.122	0.601	0.243
Strengthen Customer Relationships	400	3.860	0.923	0.853	-0.717	0.122	0.388	0.243
Positive Brand Building	400	3.963	0.835	0.698	-0.500	0.122	-0.038	0.243
Valid N (listwise)	398							

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

The descriptive statistics show that all variables have mean scores above 3.7, indicating a generally positive respondent attitude toward brand strategies and loyalty drivers. The highest-rated factor is "Personalized Customer Experiences" (Mean = 4.008), while "Improve Product Quality" received the lowest (Mean = 3.708). Standard deviation values are below 1.05, reflecting moderate response consistency. Skewness values are slightly negative, suggesting most responses leaned toward agreement. Kurtosis values are close to normal,

with a few variables slightly leptokurtic. Overall, the data indicates strong perceptions toward branding and loyalty efforts, with room for improvement in product quality.

Table 7.5		ANOVA				
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Improve Product Quality	Between Groups	7.2	6	1.206	1.098	0.363
	Within Groups	431.5	393	1.098		
Strategic Marketing Campaigns	Between Groups	5.7	6	0.957	1.295	0.258
	Within Groups	290.2	393	0.739		
Social Responsibility Initiatives	Between Groups	7.4	6	1.227	1.372	0.225
	Within Groups	351.6	393	0.895		
Excellent Customer Service	Between Groups	7.5	6	1.251	1.418	0.206
	Within Groups	345.8	392	0.882		
Customer Loyalty Programs	Between Groups	8.7	6	1.455	1.739	0.111
	Within Groups	328.9	393	0.837		
Personalized Customer Experiences	Between Groups	3.3	6	0.552	0.744	0.615
	Within Groups	291.7	393	0.742		
Strong Brand Image	Between Groups	10.6	6	1.771	1.828	0.092
	Within Groups	379.7	392	0.969		
Brand Loyalty Correlation	Between Groups	9.4	6	1.562	2.050	0.058
	Within Groups	299.5	393	0.762		
Gather Customer Feedback	Between Groups	6.8	6	1.129	1.334	0.241
	Within Groups	332.7	393	0.846		
Digital Marketing Investment	Between Groups	8.0	6	1.339	1.325	0.245
	Within Groups	397.0	393	1.010		
Strengthen Customer Relationships	Between Groups	5.5	6	0.915	1.074	0.377
	Within Groups	334.7	393	0.852		

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

The ANOVA table assesses whether there are statistically significant differences among groups for various brand and loyalty-related factors. None of the variables show significance at the 0.05 level (Sig. > 0.05), indicating no strong differences between group means across all tested factors. "Brand Loyalty Correlation" (Sig. = 0.058) and "Strong Brand Image" (Sig. = 0.092) are the closest to significance, suggesting a potential influence worth further exploration. "Customer Loyalty Programs" (Sig. = 0.111) and "Excellent Customer Service" (Sig. = 0.206) also show moderate F values but remain statistically insignificant. The lowest significance value is seen in "Positive Brand Building" (Sig. = 0.937), implying the least group variation. Most F-values are below 2.0, reflecting minimal variance between groups. Overall, the data suggests that none of the independent factors significantly affect group differences in the tested variables. Further research or larger samples may be needed to uncover deeper patterns.

Table 7. 6

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Variable	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Improve Product Quality	2.276	6	393	0.036
Strategic Marketing Campaigns	1.622	6	393	0.140
Social Responsibility Initiatives	1.361	6	393	0.229
Excellent Customer Service	2.183	6	392	0.044
Customer Loyalty Programs	0.455	6	393	0.842
Personalized Customer Experiences	1.402	6	393	0.213
Strong Brand Image	4.376	6	392	0.000
Brand Loyalty Correlation	4.293	6	393	0.000
Gather Customer Feedback	1.455	6	393	0.192
Digital Marketing Investment	1.422	6	393	0.205
Strengthen Customer Relationships	1.114	6	393	0.353
Positive Brand Building	1.029	6	393	0.406

Source: Primary data – SPSS output

Levene's Test assesses variance homogeneity across groups. A Sig. value < 0.05 indicates unequal variances. "Strong Brand Image" (p=0.000) and "Brand Loyalty Correlation" (p=0.000) have significantly unequal variances. "Improve Product Quality" (p=0.036) and "Excellent Customer Service" (p=0.044) also show unequal variances. Most other factors, like "Strategic Marketing Campaigns" (p=0.140), exhibit homogeneous variances.

## 8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- The study highlights that brand image significantly influences customer loyalty in the agarbathies market across Karnataka. Emotional connection, fragrance satisfaction, and consistent product quality were statistically significant in predicting loyalty ( $F = 172.389$  and  $F = 157.224$ ), emphasizing the role of brand perception in repeat purchases.
- Additionally, fragrance appeal, packaging design, and product trust showed notable influence, especially in Mysore and Bangalore, where customers reported high emotional attachment and brand satisfaction.
- Customers demonstrated varying levels of brand loyalty across regions, with significant regional differences observed in 10 out of 12 measured variables. Emotional satisfaction from consistent fragrance ( $F = 7.791$ ), trust in brand promises, and recommendation behavior were key outcomes.
- The strongest positive responses were recorded in Bangalore and Mysore, while Mandya and ChamaraJanagara showed moderate agreement, indicating varied loyalty behaviors based on local expectations.
- The interplay between fragrance preference, tradition, and packaging highlights the strategic potential for personalized branding efforts in different regions.
- Agarbathies brands should focus on enhancing emotional loyalty by promoting trust, authenticity, and consistent product experience. This includes connecting with regional identities and cultural rituals, which strengthen consumer relationships.
- While promotional campaigns may increase brand visibility, long-term loyalty depends more on emotional satisfaction and value perception than on temporary offers or price-based tactics.
- Including regional insights and feedback mechanisms can help brands tailor fragrance options, packaging, and messaging that resonate more effectively with local customers, ultimately improving brand loyalty across Karnataka.



## 9. CONCLUSION

Customers in Karnataka use agarbathies mainly for religious and aromatic purposes, with their choices influenced by brand trust, fragrance, packaging, and cultural connection. The study found that emotional satisfaction, consistent product quality, and a strong brand image significantly drive long-term customer loyalty. While marketing and promotions may attract initial attention, sustained loyalty is built through trust, tradition, and personal relevance. Regional preferences, especially in places like Mysore and Bangalore, highlight the importance of localized branding strategies. Future research could explore changing consumer preferences and the impact of digital outreach, emotional branding, and sustainability initiatives to better understand what strengthens brand loyalty in the agarbathies sector.

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