



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND LOYALTY – A STUDY ON ITC

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### ABSTRACT

This study is based on understanding something that we come across almost every day but don't always stop and think about properly—why people keep buying the same brand again and again, even when there are many other options available. In today's market, just having a good product is definitely important, but at the same time, it is no longer enough on its own. Customers now expect brands to connect with them in a more meaningful and consistent way.

The main objective of this research is to examine how consumer engagement influences brand loyalty, especially in the FMCG sector, with ITC as the primary focus. A total of 81 responses were collected through a questionnaire. While collecting the data, it was observed that many people already had fixed preferences for certain brands, even when similar alternatives were easily available in the market.

Factors like trust, product quality, and communication were taken into consideration. It was also noticed that people who interact more with a brand—either directly through usage or indirectly through advertisements and social media—tend to develop a stronger sense of trust over time.

So, engagement may not always be clearly visible, but it works gradually in the background. Over time, it builds familiarity, and that familiarity often turns into loyalty without the consumer even realizing it fully.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The FMCG sector in India is growing very fast, and at the same time, competition is increasing day by day. Consumers today have a wide range of choices, and switching from one brand to another is not very difficult anymore. Because of this, companies are now required to do much more than just offer good-quality products.

Consumer engagement has become an important concept in this situation. In simple terms, it refers to how connected or involved a customer feels with a particular brand. This connection can be emotional, behavioral, or even social depending on how the consumer interacts with the brand.

ITC Limited is one of the major players in the FMCG sector. Its products are widely used in everyday life, often without people even realizing how frequently they depend on them.

While working on this study, one thing became quite noticeable—many people don't consciously think about brand loyalty, but their behavior clearly reflects it. For example, some respondents mentioned that they have been using the same product for years without really thinking about switching to another option.

This makes the topic not only theoretical but also very practical and relatable to real-life situations.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to understand how consumer engagement contributes to building brand loyalty.

More specifically, the study aims to:

- Understand how consumers interact with ITC products in their daily lives
- Identify the key factors that influence brand loyalty
- Study the relationship between engagement and loyalty in a practical context
- Analyze which platforms (such as social media or advertisements) influence consumers the most
- Observe how trust and product quality affect buying behavior

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing has changed quite a lot over time. Earlier, the main focus was on selling products and increasing sales. However, now the focus has shifted more towards building long-term relationships with customers.

Consumer engagement is something that develops gradually. It does not happen instantly. Usually, people first become aware of a brand, then they try it, and over time, based on their experience, they may start trusting it.

Another important point is that engagement can exist at different levels. Some consumers may only be aware of a brand, while others may feel strongly connected to it and even recommend it to others.

Social media has also played a major role in changing how engagement works. Brands can now directly communicate with consumers, which was not really possible earlier. This has made interactions more frequent and more personal.

Most studies suggest that when engagement increases, loyalty tends to increase as well. However, this relationship is not always immediate—it develops over time through consistent experience.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, the approach was kept fairly simple, mainly because the intention was to understand actual consumer behavior rather than make the process too technical. In many cases, when research becomes overly complex, the real-world aspect gets lost. So here, the focus was more on observing patterns in a practical way.

A descriptive research design was used. This basically means the study tries to describe what is happening instead of testing complicated theories. It felt more suitable because consumer engagement is something people experience in their daily routine, not something they calculate or think about deeply.

Data collection was done using both primary and secondary sources. The primary data came from a questionnaire. While preparing it, one thing that became clear was that people respond better to simple questions. If questions are too long or confusing, they tend to lose interest or just answer randomly. So the wording was kept straightforward.

During the response collection, something interesting came up. A few people actually paused and thought before answering certain questions, especially the ones related to loyalty. This suggests that people don't always consciously think about why they prefer a brand, even though they clearly have preferences.

Secondary data was taken from books, journals, and some online reports. This helped in understanding how the topic has been studied earlier and what kind of conclusions were already available.

The sample size was 81 respondents. Most of them were students or working individuals, which makes sense because they regularly purchase FMCG products. Even though the number is not very large, it still gives a general idea of behavior patterns.

Convenience sampling was used, mainly due to time limitations. This means responses were collected from people who were easily accessible. It may not represent everyone, but for a study like this, it still provides useful insights.

For analysis, basic tools like averages and percentages were used. The aim was not to make it overly technical but to understand the responses clearly. In fact, even simple data, when looked at carefully, can reveal quite a lot.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 Mean Scores

Variable	Score
Consumer Engagement	4.05
Brand Loyalty	4.12

**Interpretation:** The scores are above average, showing that customers are fairly engaged and loyal to ITC.

### 5.2 Awareness Level

Category	Percentage
Aware	90%
Not Aware	10%

**Interpretation:** Most respondents are familiar with ITC products, which shows strong market presence.

### 5.3 Engagement Channels

Channel	Percentage
Social Media	35%
TV Ads	30%
Word of Mouth	20%
Others	15%

**Interpretation:** Social media is the top platform for engagement, followed closely by TV advertisements.

## 6. FINDINGS

After going through everything carefully, a few patterns started becoming clearer, even though not all of them were obvious from the beginning.

One thing that comes out is that engagement and loyalty are connected, but not in a very direct way. People don't actively decide to be loyal. It just develops slowly as they keep interacting with the same brand over time.

At the same time, engagement alone doesn't guarantee anything. If the product quality is not up to the mark, people won't continue using it. This came out quite clearly from a few responses.

Social media plays a role, but not in the way we usually assume. People may not pay full attention to ads, but repeated exposure still creates some level of familiarity.

Recommendations also matter a lot. Many people trust what others say more than what brands say about themselves.

Another thing is that loyalty takes time. It doesn't happen after one or two purchases. It builds gradually through repeated experiences.

## 7. DISCUSSION

When the findings are looked at in a more practical sense, it becomes quite clear that consumer behavior is not always planned or based on clear logic. In many situations, people don't actively sit and compare options before making a purchase. Instead, they tend to go with what they are already used to. Habit plays a bigger role than most people realize.

Engagement, in this case, does not always work in a direct or visible way. It builds slowly. When people keep seeing the same brand again and again—whether in stores, online, or even at home—it starts feeling familiar. That familiarity, over time, turns into a kind of comfort, and eventually into trust. Most consumers don't consciously notice this shift happening.

In the case of ITC, this was quite evident. Many respondents mentioned that they regularly use certain products but have never really thought about why they prefer them. That itself is an important point. It

shows that engagement does not always have to be active, like following a brand or interacting with its content. Even regular usage without much thought can be a strong form of connection.

Another thing that became noticeable is that people do not engage in the same way. Some individuals are more involved—they follow brands, notice advertisements, and keep track of updates. Others don't pay much attention to these things, yet they still continue buying the same products. So, engagement is not just one type; it can exist in different forms.

While going through the responses, one thing that personally stood out was that people are not always fully aware of their own behavior. They might say that they are open to trying new brands, but when asked about their actual purchases, they often stick to the same ones. This difference between what people say and what they actually do makes the topic more interesting and also more realistic.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the overall findings, a few suggestions can be considered, although they are more practical in nature rather than theoretical.

To begin with, it seems important that brands focus more on building a connection with consumers instead of only trying to increase visibility. In today's environment, people are exposed to a large number of advertisements every day. Because of this, many ads are simply ignored or forgotten very quickly. What actually makes a difference is when something feels relatable or connects with everyday life in some way.

Another point that comes up is related to communication. If the messaging feels too generic or repetitive, people tend to lose interest. On the other hand, even small changes that make communication feel slightly more personal can improve how the brand is perceived. It doesn't have to be something very advanced—just a more thoughtful approach can help.

Feedback is another area where brands can improve. Even though not every customer actively gives feedback, they still expect that their opinions matter. When a brand responds or acknowledges concerns, it creates a better impression. If this is ignored repeatedly, it can slowly affect trust.

At the same time, one thing that clearly stands out is that product quality cannot be compromised. No matter how strong the engagement efforts are, if the product does not meet expectations, customers will eventually move away. In a way, engagement may attract attention, but quality is what keeps customers connected.

Consistency is also important. Consumers generally prefer stability. Even if everything is not perfect, maintaining a consistent experience builds confidence over time. Sudden changes or inconsistency can create doubt.

Another small observation is that brands should not depend only on digital platforms. While social media is important, not everyone interacts with brands in the same way. Some people are influenced more by what they see around them in daily life or through recommendations. So, keeping a balance between different channels can be more effective.

## 9. LIMITATIONS

There are certain limitations in this study that should be taken into account while looking at the results.

Firstly, the sample size is relatively small. With only 81 responses, the findings give a general idea, but they may not fully represent a larger population. If more participants were included, the results might have shown some variation.

Another limitation is related to the type of respondents. Most of them belong to a similar age group, mainly students and young professionals. Because of this, the results may reflect their preferences more than those of other age groups.

Time was also a limiting factor. Since the study was conducted within a fixed period, it was not possible to explore every aspect in detail. With more time, additional factors could have been included.

It was also noticed that some responses may not be completely accurate. This is quite common in surveys, as people sometimes answer quickly or may not think deeply about their choices. In some cases, responses felt slightly inconsistent, which again reflects real human behavior.

Another limitation is that the study focuses mainly on ITC. While this helps in keeping the research specific, it also means that the findings may not apply in exactly the same way to other companies or industries.

Even with these limitations, the study still provides a useful understanding of the topic.

## 10. CONCLUSION

To sum it up, this study was mainly an attempt to understand something that we come across regularly but don't always think about in detail—why people continue choosing the same brands even when other options are easily available.

From the responses, it becomes quite clear that engagement does play a role, but it is not always something that people notice directly. It works gradually and often in the background, through repeated exposure and experience.

Loyalty, in most cases, does not develop suddenly. It builds over time. When consumers keep using a product and have a generally satisfactory experience, they become comfortable with it. This comfort slowly turns into trust, and over time, it becomes a habit.

In the case of ITC, the brand has managed to become part of everyday usage for many people. However, maintaining this position is just as important as achieving it. In a competitive market, even small changes can influence consumer decisions.

One thing that became quite interesting during this study is that people are not always fully aware of their own preferences. They may not consider themselves loyal, but their actions show a clear pattern.

Overall, it can be understood that engagement, trust, product experience, and consistency all play a role together. None of these factors work alone, and it is their combined effect that leads to long-term brand loyalty.

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