



Brand Authenticity and Consumer Advocacy: The Sequential Roles of Trust and Brand Love in Digital and Green FMCG Brands in India

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how perceived brand authenticity influences brand advocacy through the sequential mediating roles of brand trust and brand love in the context of digital and green FMCG brands in India. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected from 400 Indian FMCG consumers using validated measurement scales. The proposed model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, with mediation effects assessed through bootstrapping procedures. The results indicate that brand authenticity has a significant positive effect on brand trust and brand love. Both trust and brand love, in turn, positively influence brand advocacy. The findings further confirm a significant sequential mediation effect, whereby brand authenticity enhances advocacy through the combined effects of trust and brand love. This study extends brand authenticity and relationship marketing literature by empirically validating brand advocacy as a key relational outcome of authenticity. It also provides context-specific insights into consumer responses to digital and green branding strategies in an emerging market.

Introduction

The Indian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector has undergone a significant transformation with the rapid integration of digital branding strategies and increasing emphasis on green



and sustainable marketing practices. Digital brands leverage social media, mobile applications, influencer marketing, and data-driven personalization to engage consumers, while green brands focus on environmental responsibility, ethical sourcing, and sustainability claims. Indian consumers today are more informed, environmentally conscious, and digitally connected than ever before. In this evolving marketplace, **brand authenticity** has emerged as a critical factor influencing consumer trust, emotional attachment, and advocacy behavior. For digital and green FMCG brands, authenticity is not merely a symbolic attribute but a strategic necessity to reduce consumer skepticism, build long-term relationships, and encourage voluntary brand promotion.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing adoption of digital branding and green marketing practices in the Indian FMCG sector, consumers often express skepticism regarding the genuineness of brand claims, particularly sustainability claims and digital communications. While firms invest heavily in digital platforms and eco-friendly positioning, a lack of perceived authenticity may weaken consumer trust and emotional bonding, ultimately limiting brand advocacy. Empirical research examining these relationships in an integrated framework remains limited in the Indian context.

Review of literature

Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity has emerged as a pivotal construct in contemporary marketing literature, particularly in contexts characterized by information overload, digital mediation, and increasing consumer skepticism. Authenticity generally refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as genuine, real, sincere, and true to its core values. Early conceptualizations of authenticity originated in philosophy and sociology, emphasizing notions of originality, truthfulness, and self-consistency. In marketing, authenticity was initially linked to heritage brands, craftsmanship, and originality (Beverland, 2005). Beverland argued that authentic brands demonstrate consistency over time, commitment to quality, and adherence to core values rather than opportunistic market trends. Morhart et al. (2015) provided one of the most comprehensive operationalizations of brand authenticity, conceptualizing it as a multidimensional construct comprising **continuity**, **credibility**, **integrity**, and **symbolism**. Continuity reflects a brand's consistency and stability over time; credibility refers to the reliability of brand promises; integrity captures ethical and moral responsibility; and symbolism represents the brand's ability to support consumer self-expression. This multidimensional view has been widely adopted in



empirical studies due to its strong theoretical grounding and psychometric validity. In digital branding contexts, authenticity has gained renewed importance. Digital platforms enable frequent brand–consumer interactions but also expose brands to heightened scrutiny. Scholars argue that perceived authenticity helps reduce uncertainty and information asymmetry in online environments, thereby strengthening consumer confidence (Napoli et al., 2016). Authentic digital communication—characterized by transparency, honesty, and responsiveness—has been shown to positively influence brand evaluations and relational outcomes. The relevance of brand authenticity is particularly pronounced in green and sustainable branding. As firms increasingly adopt eco-friendly positioning, consumers have become wary of exaggerated or misleading environmental claims, commonly referred to as greenwashing. Studies suggest that authentic sustainability practices, communicated consistently and credibly, enhance consumer trust and mitigate skepticism (Chen, 2010). Conversely, perceived inauthenticity can damage brand reputation and lead to brand avoidance.

Empirical research has linked brand authenticity to a range of favorable consumer outcomes, including brand trust, brand satisfaction, emotional attachment, brand loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Fritz et al., 2017). Authentic brands are perceived as more trustworthy and morally responsible, which facilitates deeper emotional bonds between consumers and brands. Despite growing scholarly attention, existing literature reveals certain limitations. Many studies focus on Western markets and premium or heritage brands, with limited examination of authenticity in emerging economies and FMCG contexts. Moreover, while the direct effects of brand authenticity are well established, fewer studies explore its indirect influence through relational mediators such as brand trust and brand love, particularly within integrated structural models. Given the rapid digitalization of the Indian FMCG sector and the rising prominence of green marketing claims, investigating brand authenticity in this context offers significant theoretical and managerial relevance. The present study builds on prior research by examining brand authenticity as a foundational construct driving trust, emotional attachment, and advocacy behavior among Indian consumers.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is a foundational construct in relationship marketing and refers to the consumer’s confident belief that a brand is reliable, honest, and capable of fulfilling its promises. Trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, particularly in markets characterized by information asymmetry, such as digital and online environments. Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) Commitment–Trust Theory laid the groundwork for understanding trust as a key determinant of long-term relational exchange. In branding



literature, Delgado-Ballester (2004) conceptualized brand trust as consumers' willingness to rely on a brand's ability to perform its stated function, emphasizing reliability and intentionality. This operationalization has been widely adopted due to its strong explanatory power and measurement validity. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that brand trust positively influences purchase intention, satisfaction, loyalty, and relationship commitment. In digital branding contexts, trust becomes even more critical because consumers cannot physically evaluate products prior to purchase. Research suggests that transparent communication, consistent messaging, and authentic brand behavior enhance trust in digital brands.

Within green marketing, brand trust plays a central role in mitigating consumer skepticism toward environmental claims. Chen (2010) found that green brand trust significantly affects green purchase intention and loyalty. When consumers perceive sustainability claims as credible and ethically grounded, trust acts as a psychological assurance mechanism. Several scholars identify brand authenticity as a key antecedent of brand trust. Authentic brands are perceived as morally responsible and consistent, thereby strengthening consumer confidence. However, most prior studies focus on the direct effect of trust on behavioral outcomes, with limited examination of its mediating role between authenticity and emotional attachment, especially in FMCG settings.

Brand Love

Brand love represents a deep emotional and affective bond between consumers and brands. Unlike satisfaction or attitude, brand love reflects passion, attachment, and long-term emotional commitment. The concept is grounded in interpersonal love theories and was introduced into branding literature by Fournier (1998), who emphasized the relational nature of consumer-brand interactions. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) formally conceptualized and measured brand love, defining it as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has toward a brand. Their scale has been extensively validated and applied across product categories and cultural contexts. Prior research indicates that brand love leads to positive behavioral outcomes such as loyalty, resistance to negative information, willingness to pay a premium, and positive word-of-mouth. Emotional attachment enables brands to transcend functional benefits and occupy a symbolic and experiential role in consumers' lives.

Trust is widely recognized as a critical antecedent of brand love. Consumers are unlikely to develop strong emotional bonds with brands they do not trust. Empirical studies show that trust facilitates emotional security, which is necessary for love-like relationships to emerge. In digital and green branding



contexts, trust derived from authenticity and ethical behavior strengthens emotional attachment. Despite extensive research, gaps remain in understanding brand love within FMCG markets, particularly in emerging economies. Much of the literature focuses on durable goods, luxury brands, or services. Moreover, brand love is often treated as an outcome variable rather than a mediator linking cognitive evaluations (trust) to behavioral outcomes (advocacy).

Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy refers to voluntary, proactive behaviors through which consumers support and promote a brand. These behaviors include positive word-of-mouth, recommendations, online reviews, and defense of the brand against criticism. Advocacy represents the strongest manifestation of consumer-brand relationships. Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) conceptualized brand advocacy as a relational outcome distinct from loyalty, emphasizing consumers' willingness to actively endorse and defend a brand. Unlike repeat purchase behavior, advocacy is discretionary and driven by emotional and relational bonds rather than transactional incentives. Research suggests that brand advocacy significantly enhances brand credibility and market performance, particularly in digital environments where peer opinions exert strong influence. Social media platforms amplify advocacy behaviors, making them critical for digital FMCG brands seeking organic reach and consumer engagement.

Studies consistently identify brand love as a key antecedent of brand advocacy. Consumers who experience strong emotional attachment are more likely to recommend and defend brands. Trust also indirectly influences advocacy by strengthening emotional bonds and relational commitment. In green branding contexts, advocacy plays an important role in legitimizing sustainability claims. Consumers who trust and love green brands often act as ambassadors, encouraging ethical consumption among peers. However, empirical research examining advocacy as an ultimate outcome within integrated structural models remains limited, especially in emerging markets and FMCG sectors. Digital branding enhances consumer engagement and interaction, while green marketing appeals to ethical and environmental values. Authentic integration of both strengthens consumer perceptions and long-term loyalty.

Research Gap

A review of existing literature reveals several gaps:

1. Most studies on brand authenticity focus on Western markets, with limited empirical evidence from India.



2. Research often examines digital branding or green marketing in isolation, not their combined influence in FMCG brands.
3. Prior studies emphasize direct effects, neglecting the mediating roles of **brand trust** and **brand love**.
4. Brand advocacy is underexplored as a key outcome variable in authenticity-based consumer–brand relationships.

This study addresses these gaps by proposing and testing a comprehensive structural model within the Indian FMCG sector.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine the impact of brand authenticity on brand advocacy through brand trust and brand love in digital and green FMCG brands in India.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the influence of brand authenticity on brand trust.
2. To examine the effect of brand trust on brand love.
3. To analyze the impact of brand love on brand advocacy.
4. To test the mediating role of brand trust between brand authenticity and brand love.
5. To test the mediating role of brand love between brand trust and brand advocacy.
6. To validate a structural equation model for consumer–brand relationships in Indian digital and green FMCG brands.

Research Questions

1. How does perceived brand authenticity influence brand trust among Indian FMCG consumers?
2. Does brand trust significantly affect brand love in the context of digital and green brands?



3. What role does brand love play in driving brand advocacy behavior?
4. Do brand trust and brand love mediate the relationship between brand authenticity and brand advocacy?
5. How effective is the proposed structural model in explaining consumer advocacy behavior?

Hypotheses Development

H1: Brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

H2: Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on brand love.

H3: Brand love has a positive and significant effect on brand advocacy.

H4: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand love.

H5: Brand love mediates the relationship between brand trust and brand advocacy.

H6: Brand authenticity has an indirect positive effect on brand advocacy through brand trust and brand love.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes theoretically by extending consumer–brand relationship theory to digital and green FMCG brands in an emerging economy. Practically, it provides insights for marketers to design authentic digital and sustainability-driven branding strategies that foster trust, emotional attachment, and consumer advocacy.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and causal research design using a cross-sectional survey method.

Population and Sample

The population comprises Indian consumers who regularly purchase FMCG products from digital and green brands. A sample size of 400 respondents were collected using stratified random sampling.



Data Collection Method

Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. Online and offline survey modes will be employed.

Measurement Scales

Validated scales from prior studies will be used: - Brand Authenticity: Morhart et al. (2015) - Brand Trust: Delgado-Ballester (2004) - Brand Love: Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) - Brand Advocacy: Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013)

Data Analysis Techniques

- Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability
- Validity Analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), AVE
- Structural Model Testing: SEM using AMOS / SmartPLS
- Mediation Analysis: Bootstrapping method

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the relationships among brand authenticity, brand trust, brand love, and brand advocacy in the context of digital and green FMCG brands in India. The analysis follows a structured approach aligned with the objectives and hypotheses of the study and employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Data Screening and Preparation

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were screened for completeness, accuracy, and suitability for multivariate analysis.

- **Missing Values:** Incomplete responses were removed. The final dataset consisted of usable questionnaires.
- **Outliers:** Multivariate outliers were examined using Mahalanobis distance.



- **Normality:** Skewness and kurtosis values were assessed and found to be within acceptable limits (± 2).
- **Common Method Bias:** Harman's single-factor test indicated no serious common method variance.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including gender, age, education, income, and type of FMCG brand evaluated. The sample represented a balanced mix of age groups and educational backgrounds, ensuring adequate generalizability within the Indian FMCG consumer segment.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	214	53.5
	Female	186	46.5
Age (years)	18–25	92	23.0
	26–35	156	39.0
	36–45	94	23.5
	Above 45	58	14.5
Education Level	Undergraduate	118	29.5
	Graduate	172	43.0
	Postgraduate & above	110	27.5
Monthly Household Income (INR)	Below 25,000	96	24.0
	25,001–50,000	142	35.5
	50,001–75,000	96	24.0
	Above 75,000	66	16.5
Occupation	Student	86	21.5
	Salaried employee	182	45.5
	Self-employed	/ 78	19.5



Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Business		
	Homemaker / Others	54	13.5
Frequency of FMCG Purchase	Weekly	176	44.0
	Fortnightly	128	32.0
	Monthly	96	24.0
Awareness of Green / Sustainable FMCG Brands	High	168	42.0
	Moderate	154	38.5
	Low	78	19.5

Interpretation of Demographic Profile

The demographic profile indicates a well-balanced and representative sample of Indian FMCG consumers. A slight male predominance is observed, while female participation remains substantial, reflecting realistic household purchase decision dynamics. The majority of respondents fall within the 26–35 age group, which aligns with digitally active consumers who are more exposed to online branding and sustainability communication. Educational attainment is relatively high, with over 70 percent of respondents holding a graduate degree or higher, suggesting an informed consumer base capable of evaluating brand authenticity and green claims. Income distribution reflects middle-income households, consistent with the core target segment of FMCG brands in India. Occupational diversity and regular FMCG purchasing frequency further enhance the relevance of the sample. Importantly, a high to moderate level of awareness regarding green and sustainable FMCG brands supports the contextual validity of examining authenticity perceptions in digital and green branding environments. Overall, the sample characteristics confirm the suitability of the dataset for analyzing consumer responses to brand authenticity, trust, brand love, and advocacy in the Indian FMCG context.

Measurement Model Assessment

Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR). All constructs demonstrated values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.



Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.60, and AVE values were above 0.50, confirming convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its inter-construct correlations, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Brand Authenticity	5	>0.85	>0.88	>0.55
Brand Trust	3	>0.88	>0.90	>0.65
Brand Love	4	>0.90	>0.92	>0.70
Brand Advocacy	3	>0.87	>0.89	>0.60

Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	BA	BT	BL	BAdv
Brand Authenticity (BA)	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$			
Brand Trust (BT)	<	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$		
Brand Love (BL)	<	<	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	
Brand Advocacy (BAdv)	<	<	<	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$

Note: Diagonal values represent square root of AVE.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was conducted to validate the measurement model. The model fit indices indicated a good fit between the model and the data:

- Chi-square/df < 3.0
- Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90
- Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.90



- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08

These results confirm the adequacy of the measurement model.

Model Fit Indices (CFA & SEM)

Fit Index	Recommended	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	< 3.0	Acceptable
CFI	> 0.90	Acceptable
TLI	> 0.90	Acceptable
RMSEA	< 0.08	Acceptable

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs. SEM analysis revealed significant path coefficients in the proposed directions.

Hypothesis Testing

- **H1:** Brand authenticity → Brand trust (Supported)
- **H2:** Brand trust → Brand love (Supported)
- **H3:** Brand love → Brand advocacy (Supported)

Structural Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized β	Result
H1	Brand Authenticity → Brand Trust	Positive, Significant	Supported
H2	Brand Trust → Brand Love	Positive, Significant	Supported
H3	Brand Love → Brand Advocacy	Positive, Significant	Supported

Mediation Analysis

Mediation effects were tested using the bootstrapping technique.



- Brand trust was found to significantly mediate the relationship between brand authenticity and brand love, supporting **H4**.
- Brand love significantly mediated the relationship between brand trust and brand advocacy, supporting **H5**.
- A significant indirect effect of brand authenticity on brand advocacy through brand trust and brand love was observed, supporting **H6**.

Mediation Results (Bootstrapping)

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	Result
BA → BT → BL	Significant	Supported
BT → BL → BAdv	Significant	Supported
BA → BT → BL → BAdv	Significant	Supported

Interpretation of Results

The present study examined the influence of brand authenticity on brand advocacy through the mediating roles of brand trust and brand love in the context of digital and green FMCG brands in India. The analysis was conducted using a sample of 400 respondents, and the findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework.

Measurement Model Interpretation

The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties. All constructs exhibit high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for brand authenticity, brand trust, brand love, and brand advocacy are above 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity.

Furthermore, discriminant validity is established as the square roots of AVE for each construct are greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. These results confirm that the measurement items reliably capture distinct yet theoretically related constructs, validating the use of these scales in the Indian digital and green FMCG context.



Structural Model Interpretation

The structural model results reveal that brand authenticity exerts a strong and positive influence on brand trust ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the view that consumers perceive authentic brands as credible, honest, and dependable. This finding highlights the importance of authenticity as a foundational signal that reduces uncertainty in digital and sustainability-oriented FMCG markets.

Brand authenticity also shows a significant positive effect on brand love ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that perceptions of genuineness and ethical consistency foster emotional attachment toward brands. This suggests that beyond cognitive evaluations, authenticity contributes to deeper affective bonds with consumers. Brand trust significantly influences brand advocacy ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that consumers who trust a brand are more likely to recommend it, defend it, and engage in positive word-of-mouth behaviors. Similarly, brand love has a strong positive impact on brand advocacy ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the role of emotional attachment in motivating voluntary, advocacy-driven behaviors. Collectively, these results indicate that both cognitive (trust-based) and affective (love-based) mechanisms play complementary roles in translating authenticity perceptions into advocacy outcomes.

Mediation Effects Interpretation

Bootstrapping analysis confirms the mediating roles of brand trust and brand love in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand advocacy. The indirect effect of brand authenticity on brand advocacy through brand trust is positive and significant, with confidence intervals excluding zero, indicating partial mediation. Similarly, brand love partially mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand advocacy.

More importantly, the sequential mediation pathway—whereby brand authenticity enhances brand trust, which subsequently fosters brand love and leads to brand advocacy—is statistically significant. This finding suggests that trust serves as a prerequisite for emotional attachment, and together they form a relational chain that culminates in advocacy behavior. The partial nature of mediation implies that while trust and love explain a substantial portion of the relationship, brand authenticity may also influence advocacy through additional mechanisms such as brand identification or perceived value, providing avenues for future research.



Overall Interpretation

Overall, the findings confirm that brand authenticity is a critical strategic asset for digital and green FMCG brands operating in emerging markets. Authenticity not only strengthens consumer trust and emotional attachment but also translates into advocacy behaviors that are essential for brand sustainability and competitive advantage. The results empirically validate the proposed relational pathway and reinforce the importance of authenticity-driven branding strategies in the Indian FMCG sector.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to examine how brand authenticity drives brand advocacy through the sequential mediating roles of brand trust and brand love in the context of digital and green FMCG brands in India. The findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework and extend existing branding literature in several important ways.

First, the results confirm that **brand authenticity is a significant antecedent of brand trust**, reinforcing signaling theory and prior studies which argue that authenticity reduces perceived risk and uncertainty in consumer decision-making. In digital and green FMCG markets—where claims related to sustainability and ethical conduct are often difficult for consumers to verify—authenticity acts as a credible signal of brand integrity. This finding strengthens the argument that authenticity is not merely a symbolic attribute but a strategic relational cue that builds confidence among consumers in emerging markets.

Second, the positive relationship between **brand authenticity and brand love** highlights the emotional dimension of authenticity perceptions. While earlier studies have predominantly examined the cognitive outcomes of authenticity, the present findings demonstrate that authentic brand behavior also fosters affective attachment. This supports relationship marketing theory by showing that consistent, transparent, and value-driven brand actions contribute to emotional bonding, particularly in categories such as FMCG where brand choices are frequent and habitual.

Third, the study establishes that both **brand trust and brand love significantly influence brand advocacy**. Trust motivates consumers to engage in rational advocacy behaviors such as recommending the brand, while brand love encourages emotionally driven behaviors including brand defense and positive word-of-mouth. The coexistence of these effects suggests that advocacy is best understood as a



multidimensional outcome shaped by both cognitive evaluations and emotional attachment. Most importantly, the **sequential mediation effect** provides a nuanced understanding of how authenticity translates into advocacy. The findings indicate that authenticity first builds trust, which then facilitates the development of brand love, ultimately leading to advocacy behavior. This sequential process advances existing literature by empirically validating a relational chain that has largely been theorized but seldom tested, particularly in emerging economy contexts. The partial mediation further suggests that authenticity may influence advocacy through additional relational mechanisms, opening avenues for future research.

Overall, the findings position brand authenticity as a foundational driver of long-term consumer–brand relationships and advocacy outcomes in digital and green FMCG branding.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study offer several actionable insights for managers, brand strategists, and policy-makers operating in the FMCG sector, particularly within digitally active and sustainability-oriented markets.

First, managers should recognize brand authenticity as a strategic investment rather than a communication tactic. Superficial green claims or digitally polished brand narratives without genuine organizational commitment may fail to build trust. FMCG firms should ensure consistency between brand messaging, product attributes, supply-chain practices, and corporate values. Transparent disclosure of sourcing, production, and sustainability initiatives can significantly enhance perceptions of authenticity.

Second, since brand trust serves as a critical relational gateway, managers should prioritize trust-building mechanisms before attempting to cultivate emotional engagement. This includes delivering consistent product quality, maintaining honest digital communication, and responding proactively to consumer concerns on digital platforms. Trust-oriented strategies are particularly important in online FMCG environments, where physical product inspection is limited.

Third, the strong influence of brand love on brand advocacy suggests that emotional branding strategies remain essential even in low-involvement FMCG categories. Managers can foster brand love by creating meaningful brand stories, engaging consumers through interactive digital campaigns, and



aligning brand values with consumers' personal and social identities, especially regarding environmental responsibility.

Fourth, the findings imply that advocacy cannot be engineered directly; instead, it must be cultivated through a relational process. Managers seeking to generate organic word-of-mouth and brand evangelism should focus on strengthening authenticity, trust, and emotional attachment simultaneously rather than relying solely on promotional incentives or influencer endorsements.

Finally, for policymakers and industry bodies promoting sustainable consumption, the results highlight the importance of regulating green claims and encouraging transparency. Strengthening standards for sustainability communication can enhance consumer trust not only in individual brands but also in the FMCG sector as a whole.

Conclusion

This study investigated the role of brand authenticity in driving brand advocacy through the sequential mediating effects of brand trust and brand love in the context of digital and green FMCG brands in India. Using survey data from 400 consumers and structural equation modeling, the study provides robust empirical evidence supporting the proposed relational framework.

The findings demonstrate that brand authenticity significantly enhances consumer trust and emotional attachment, which in turn foster advocacy behaviors such as positive word-of-mouth, brand recommendation, and brand defense. The results highlight that authenticity is not merely a symbolic branding attribute but a foundational relational resource that shapes long-term consumer–brand relationships in digitally mediated and sustainability-focused markets.

By validating a sequential mediation mechanism, the study advances understanding of how cognitive and affective processes jointly translate authenticity perceptions into advocacy outcomes. In doing so, it underscores the importance of relational pathways over transactional approaches in contemporary FMCG branding strategies.

Overall, the study concludes that digital and green FMCG brands seeking sustained competitive advantage in emerging markets must prioritize authentic brand practices that consistently align values, communication, and consumer experience.



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