

The Importance of Brand Promise and Brand Positioning for Building Brand Loyalty in the B2B Segment: An Empirical Study of Engineering SMEs in the Pune Region

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Abstract: A brand promise is a declaration issued by a company to its customers outlining what they can anticipate from their goods and services. This relates to the value offered, including tangible and intangible advantages and experiences. The specific objectives of this research study were to determine whether or not engineering SMEs classify their unique Brand promise to build Brand loyalty, study the various value propositions of Brand promise that set the SMEs apart from their competition and explore the gaps in establishing relevant Brand promise by engineering SMEs in their brand-building initiatives in the B2B market segment.

A quantitative and analytic research approach was utilized for data collection. An empirical methodology was employed for data collection. It was found that most engineering SMEs have values, capabilities, skills, culture, resources, and personality components that differentiate them from their competitors. For fostering brand loyalty in the B2B sector, strategic choices about Brand positioning and Brand promise were driven by customer data and insights from their marketing practices. To make brand promises relevant, most SME owners and managers analyze competitors' communication, segmentation, brand associations, etc. Future research must examine brand promises for various brand types in comparable items or other industrial goods.

Keywords: Brand promise, Brand loyalty, B2B segment, Engineering SMEs

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INTRODUCTION

Brand promise and positioning are critical components in marketing and brand management, playing pivotal roles in shaping consumers' perceptions and fostering brand loyalty. The brand promise summarizes the commitment made by a brand to its customers, outlining the unique value proposition and the consistent experience consumers can expect. It serves as a promise that establishes expectations and builds trust between the Brand and its target audience. In the academic landscape, exploring the intricacies of brand promise involves a comprehensive analysis of how it influences consumer behaviour, shapes brand equity, and contributes to long-term brand success.

On the other hand, brand positioning involves the strategic effort to carve out a distinctive and compelling space for a brand within the competitive landscape. It encompasses the deliberate actions a brand takes to occupy a specific place in the minds of consumers, differentiating itself from competitors based on critical attributes and associations.

A Brand Promise is a Brand's most crucial feature. Customers remember it because it stands for the Brand's distinctiveness. A typical Brand promise would communicate the value, quality, cost, etc., of the product (or service) to customers and internal stakeholders (Beatson, 2018). A brand promise increases the perceived value and relatability by building on the positioning statement. When a Brand keeps its promises, it develops a base of devoted and content customers willing to support it and aid in its growth (Dholakia & Acciardo, 2014). Defining the Brand promise comes before developing the Brand identity. It isn't easy to create a distinctive Brand identity and compelling messaging that will appeal to

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the target audience without a clear and explicit brand promise (Wacker, 2008). An effective brand promise is advised to be defined using the formula below, and these concepts should be combined into a single, coherent thought.

In the dynamic landscape of business-to-business (B2B) interactions, the significance of brand promise in cultivating brand loyalty is a critical aspect that demands careful consideration and empirical exploration (Zaltbommel, 2023). The present study investigates the domain regarding Engineering small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) across Pune City, intending to elucidate the complex correlation between brand loyalty and brand promise within this particular industry (NAMJOSHI, 2023) B2B transactions, particularly in the engineering domain, are characterized by nuanced professional relationships, where the commitment made by a brand becomes a pivotal determinant of sustained patronage. The city of Pune, renowned for its thriving industrial sector, is an ideal backdrop for this empirical study. Engineering SMEs are pivotal in the region's economic fabric, contributing significantly to technological advancements and innovation (Chipika & Wilson, 2006). As these organizations maneuver through the intricacies of the business-to-business (B2B) sector, brand promise becomes paramount in establishing and strengthening brand loyalty.

This research seeks to transcend theoretical frameworks by exploring the empirical realities faced by Engineering SMEs in Pune City (Yi et al., 2022). Given the growing awareness among businesses regarding the critical importance of brand loyalty in guaranteeing sustained prosperity, this empirical investigation enhances the current corpus of knowledge by providing stakeholders in the business-to-business sector, specifically within the dynamic domain of engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pune City, nuanced insights, and practical implications.

Brand Promise = Positioning + Vision + Value Proposition.

Figure 1: What is Brand Promise



Source: (Copyrights, 2022)

Brand Elements that Effectively Demonstrate Brand Promise

- Brand storytelling communicates with customers through a narrative that reflects tangible values and what the Brand stands for. Emotions are more important than words or product attributes in today's competitive market. Although people may forget brands or commercial designs, they remember enjoyable stories (Holmes, 2022). Since individuals of all ages are built to understand and love stories, stories can humanize any brand as people. Brand tales emotionally engage customers and make them remember them longer.
- Brand pillars are the traits and principles that can make or break any brand. They aid in defining the critical distinctions between the Brand and its competitors (Riserbato, 2023). Brand pillars are intended to distinguish a product or service within the marketplace so that consumers will appreciate and support it. These are the five brand pillars:

- **Purpose:** Purpose is the Brand's mission, which serves as its cornerstone.
- **Perception:** How consumers view a brand is known as perception.
- **Identity:** The Brand's identity is what it promotes and stands for.
- **Value:** The value is how the target market perceives the entire position of the Brand.
- **Experience:** Brand experience refers to the sensory emotions that help build brand associations.

Essential Steps for Developing the Brand Promise

- Put the target market first: The brand promise is a brand's commitment to its target market, what the audience anticipates from the Brand, the distinctive experience that the Brand offers to its clients, and what sets the Brand apart from the competitors (Jo Hatch & Schultz, 2003) The product, customer service, mission, or values that distinguish one from the competition form the foundation of the brand promise.
- Consider the touchpoints and match them to the target audience: A brand promise serves as the cornerstone for creating a long-lasting customer relationship, enabling businesses to envision how their interactions with customers will go (Buttle & Maklan, 2018)
- Keep it brief, unique, and inspiring: The brand promise is always clear, concise, and simple to comprehend, ideally fitting in a single sentence. Although it might not be as funny as a catchphrase, it should inspire confidence and trust (Bretous, 2023). Any brand combines a few factors; thus, there is no one way to develop a compelling brand promise. The Brand promise is created in four steps:
 1. Take the brand values as a guide
 2. Excite Customers
 3. Keep Promises
 4. Motivate the customers.

Importance of Brand Promise for Building Brand Loyalty in the B2B Segment

It is a strategy for setting one's goods or services apart from competitors and attracting customers. Through the deliverables it offers, it raises expectations in the minds of the customers and boosts their demand for the good or service. Brand Promise aids in building brand equity among consumers and enhancing brand perception. More recurring businesses and devoted clients would increase sales, revenue, and profit (Keller, Kevin, 1993). If the brand promise is effectively delivered to customers, it can result in long-term advantages and brand loyalty. In addition to connecting the brand promise alongside key stakeholders, constructing a strong B2B brand requires continuously improving the processes along with the infrastructure that encircles the Brand (Konečný & Kolouchová, 2013) Also, it is positive customer experiences with products and services—that is, the fulfilment of brand commitments—that foster brand loyalty; not the Brand itself.

Brand loyalty may be conceptualized as an intermediary connection connecting brand effect and brand trust, which influence the market performance dimensions of brand equity (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001). Brand loyalty indicates a customer's emotional connection to a particular brand. It reflects the likelihood that the customer will transfer to a competing brand, mainly when the Brand's pricing or product characteristics are altered (Amine, 1998). Brand loyalty is established when consumers develop a positive perception of a brand, which fosters continued purchases of that Brand. It arises when they recognize that a particular brand can fulfil their requirements. Brand loyalty signifies a consumer's dedication to consistently repurchase a specific company's products in the future (Tariq Khan, 2013). To maintain customers, it is necessary to cultivate premium loyalty by forging both an expressive and a normative connection between the customer and the Brand. Brand loyalty has the potential to mitigate the susceptibility of a customer base towards competitive maneuver, thereby directly influencing subsequent sales and profits (Aaker, 1991)

- **Trust and Credibility:** A transparent and authentic brand promise establishes trust and credibility. B2B transactions often involve significant investments and long-term partnerships. While a brand consistently fulfils its commitments, it cultivates a reputation for dependability and ethical conduct, both of which are pivotal elements in forging trust with business associates (Son et al., 2006)
- **Differentiation in a Competitive Market:** In the B2B landscape, where products and services may

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be perceived as commoditized, a distinctive brand promise sets a company apart from its competitors (Mogaji et al., 2023). It helps communicate the unique value proposition and reinforces why clients should choose and stay loyal to a particular brand over others.

- **Customer Satisfaction and Retention:** A brand promise congruent with customers' requirements and expectations enhances overall satisfaction. Optimized customers are more inclined to engage in recurrent purchases and promote the Brand, thereby stimulating customer loyalty and reducing the expenditure associated with procuring new clients (Muriuki & Muriuki, 2015)
- **Communication of Core Values:** A brand promise serves as a vehicle for communicating the core values and mission of a B2B brand. When clients align with these values, it can create a deeper, more meaningful connection, leading to stronger and more enduring business relationships.
- **Adaptability and Innovation:** While a brand promise provides consistency, it should also allow adaptability to changing market dynamics and evolving client needs. A brand that can innovate while staying true to its core promise is better positioned to maintain relevance and loyalty over time (Beverland et al., 2015)

In conclusion, a well-crafted and consistently upheld brand promise is essential for building and sustaining brand loyalty in the B2B segment. It establishes trust, differentiates the Brand, and contributes to long-term customer satisfaction, fostering enduring and profitable business relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Mody and Hanks (2019), brand passion and promise may be drivers of brand loyalty. This is because brand loyalty influences consumers' behavioural intentions, attitudes, and unwavering allegiance to the Brand. Previous research (Mody et al., 2019) (Kotsi et al., 2018) discovered a strong and positive correlation between a consumer's brand loyalty and their affection for the Brand and its promises. Consequently, maintaining brand integrity is critical for any enterprise's development and continued existence. However, knowledge and research regarding its implications and causes are minimal (Abouseada et al., 2023). According to Schmidt and Baumgarth (2010), upholding a brand promise in service organization management has been poorly undervalued (He, 2022)

Furthermore, the effects on domestic (local) brands versus foreign (international) brands are not well understood. No prior research has been conducted regarding the influence of familiarity with the brand promise, equity in the Brand, and shareholder perception upon overall brand equity, with brand loyalty as a mediating variable (Dananjoyo, 2023). Marketing is responsible for developing brand promise and equity, considered "key value drivers of business success and intangible assets." According to research, it may be evaluated from various perspectives, including financial markets, customers, and employees.

To frame the inquiry, we first consult a variety of literature on brand promise, brand loyalty, B2B market branding, brand promise in SMEs and B2B market branding in SMEs as follows:

- **Brand Promise**

Leslie de Chernatony et al. (2006) propose a three-tiered brand model that assists businesses in delineating the commitments of their brands. By expanding this model, the evaluation of the Brand's coherence is then based on how its promise can be implemented on the Internet. This article emphasizes three success-critical factors by examining how specific companies have utilized the Internet (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2006). To examine Lara Moroko et al. (2008), Customers rely on your brand promise; ideally, it is why they return. The brand promise ought to be distinctive and associated with your competitive edge—something that no other brand offers or cannot provide in the same manner that you do. It delineates the Brand's most prominent advantages, encompassing those that foster an effective bond with clientele (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). The conceptual model study conducted by Rico Piehler et al. (2018) provides organizations with valuable insights by elucidating the significance of brand signalling in conveying the brand promise along with emphasizing the criticality of employee comprehension of the Brand to fulfil that promise (Piehler, 2018)

According to Allen. (20018), including brand promise thinking into a business strategy is advantageous for establishing a culture centred around a brand. For example, 3M uses a traditional brand-building strategy to achieve this successfully (Allen et al., 2018). As per Jose R. Siqueira (2017), companies can improve customer interactions and build a foundation of devoted brand ambassadors by

applying the brand equation to link all staff behaviours to the Brand's promises and the systems necessary to keep them (Siqueira, 2017) Guilherme Guimaraes, and Daragh O'Reilly (May 2016) state that the purpose of this article is to make a connection between the ideas of loyalty, promise, and brand community to remind marketers of the importance of businesses upholding their contractual obligations to members of the community. Age, the amount of attendance, motivation to feed joining the community of brands, and the extent to which the promise of the Brand remains true have all been shown to be potential indicators of brand loyalty (Guimaraes, 2016)

- **Brand Loyalty**

The objective of the study by Wahab Ali et al. (2017) is to determine the relationship between brand loyalty awareness and purchase intent. The responses of employees in the services sector and the general public who were conveniently accessible were gathered via questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed to examine the data and derive the conclusions. Purchase intent is significantly and positively correlated with brand loyalty and awareness. Managers worldwide must foster brand awareness and loyalty, as these factors influence favourable purchase intentions (Ali, 2017). The foundation of a brand's equity is frequently the brand loyalty of its consumer base, according to Sanjeev Kumar Panchal et al. (2012). Over time, it is much simpler to develop awareness because learning is enhanced by repetition and reinforcement. Perceived quality refers to how customers evaluate a product or service's general excellence or superiority concerning its designated purpose compared to other options (Panchal et al., 2012). To investigate the effect of the Brand's experience characteristics on brand assessment and brand loyalty, Dhananjay Bapat et al. (2016) set out to do so. The research employed convenience sampling to examine the correlation between various dimensions of brand experience, the overall evaluation of the Brand, and brand loyalty. It was determined through factor analysis that a brand's experience consists of two primary dimensions: cognitive brand experience and emotive brand experience (Bapat & Thanigan, 2016)

Brand loyalty remains a crucial success factor in business-to-business (B2B) industries, as stated by Munyaradzi W. Nyadzayo and Rajesh Rajaguru (September 2017). However, based on the situation, many elements affect B2B brand loyalty. Perceived franchisee expertise and the degree of information sharing significantly influenced franchisees' effective brand connection and estimated relationship price, which foster brand loyalty, according to the results (Nyadzayo et al., 2018). According to Lin Yi and Asif Ali Safeer (July 25, 2022), technological advancements have recently increased the importance of innovative activities. Simultaneously, there has been a noticeable increase in customer complaints over the last few years. Because of this, brand loyalty is highly valued by both businesses and consumers. This study investigates the long-term sustainability of enterprises within Asian nations, including China, Pakistan, and Indonesia, as well as the correlation between innovation operations and consumer brand loyalty (Yi et al., 2022)

- **Branding in SMEs B2B Market**

This research investigates how network actors engage in branding within the framework of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that operate in business markets. Branding has traditionally been perceived as an internally controlled procedure, with little attention paid to its susceptibility to external factors. This study analyses the branding actions by network characters that influence the brand image of an SME through the use of narrative conversations (Mäläskä et al., 2011). The objective of this study by Muhammad Anees-ur-Rehman et al. (2017) is to examine the relationship between brand awareness, brand credibility, along with the financial results of business-to-business (B2B) small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and strategic hybrid orientation, which is constructed compared to brand and market orientations. The findings suggest a positive correlation between strategic mixed orientation and all the aspects of brand performance. This indicates that integrating two divergent orientations can effectively enhance the outcomes of Brand performance (Anees-ur-Rehman et al., 2017). Bill Merrilees et al. (2011) This study offers A novel viewpoint on SME advertising approaches within the B2B context. This research constructs a structural model that connects marketing capacity and performance by employing an organization's resource-centred perspective. According to the findings of a study involving 367 Australian SME businesses, two critical marketing capabilities—branding and innovation—have a significant impact on SME B2B performance (Merrilees et al., 2011)

Mike Bendixen presented a study on December 13 investigating the significance of brand development in business-to-business dealings. Even businesses that do not deal directly with customers are required, in today's hyper-competitive business environment, to give proper regard to branding and

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make it one of their key goals. This is because direct customer sales are becoming ever less common (Bendixen et al., 2004). Amber Sayal observed in 2021 that most business-to-business (B2B) marketers, particularly those active with small and medium-sized organizations (SMEs), lack a thorough grasp of branding. SMEs are defined as businesses with fewer than 500 employees (Sayal & Banerjee, 2022)

Research Gap

The existing literature on brand passion, promise, and loyalty provides valuable insights, but critical research gaps warrant further investigation. While Mody and Hanks (2019) emphasize the significance of brand passion and promise as drivers of loyalty, a comprehensive exploration of the causes and effects of these relationships is notably lacking. Unravelling the specific factors that contribute to the development of brand passion and understanding the nuanced impact on consumer behaviour is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of brand dynamics.

Moreover, Schmidt and Baumgarth (2018) shed light on the undervaluation of upholding brand promises in service organization management. The scarcity of studies on understanding the challenges and strategies for maintaining brand promises in service-oriented businesses poses a substantial research gap. Additionally, observation regarding the insufficient examination of the impact of brand promise, equity, and value perception on brand loyalty between domestic and foreign brands underscores a need for cross-cultural studies in brand management.

Furthermore, the proposed exploration of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the relationships between brand promise, equity, knowledge, and value perception highlights an unexplored area in understanding the holistic dynamics of brand equity. Lastly, despite extensive research on brand loyalty, promise, and B2B contexts, the specific focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is inadequately addressed. Given their unique challenges and opportunities, it is crucial to investigate how branding strategies differ or converge in SMEs, especially in B2B markets. Addressing these gaps will advance theoretical foundations in brand management and offer practical insights for businesses navigating diverse markets and contexts.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is designed to address the objectives centred around the significance of Brand Promise in cultivating Brand Loyalty within the engineering SMEs operating in the B2B market segment. This section outlines the approach, tools, and techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret data comprehensively.

Objectives:

This study aims to investigate the role of Brand Promise in building Brand Loyalty among engineering SMEs in the B2B market. The author followed specific objectives like: Evaluating whether engineering SMEs classify unique Brand promises to build Brand loyalty with B2B trade customers, Examining the various value propositions of Brand promises that differentiate SMEs in the B2B market and Exploring gaps in establishing relevant Brand promises by engineering SMEs in their B2B brand-building initiatives.

This study examines the significance of brand commitments methodically articulated through Engineering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in fostering customer loyalty in the business-to-business (B2B) sector. At the heart of this investigation is the question: To what extent do engineering SMEs justify the brand promise to foster brand loyalty within the B2B sector?

A hybrid research approach is adopted to address this question, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data is collected through a 7-point Likert Scale-based questionnaire distributed among 383 engineering SMEs in Pune. This structured approach systematically measures perceptions and attitudes about brand promise and loyalty. A qualitative study is also conducted, leveraging secondary data from diverse sources such as literature reviews, company websites, published books, and other relevant materials.

The tools for data collection encompass a comprehensive range of sources, including online platforms, reports, documents, books, journals, magazines, periodicals, and newspapers. This

multifaceted approach ensures a thorough examination of the research topic, providing a well-rounded perspective on the brand promise and brand loyalty dynamics in the context of engineering SMEs.

For data analysis, Microsoft Excel is employed for data organization, with tabular and graphical methods utilized for visualization. The analysis extends to advanced statistical techniques such as regression analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). This combination of statistical methods enhances the rigour and depth of the analysis, enabling a nuanced interpretation of research findings.

Hypothesis

Two hypotheses are formulated to guide the investigation:

Hypothesis 1 posits that Engineering SMEs classify a unique brand identity and brand promise to build brand loyalty, contrary to the null hypothesis suggesting the absence of such classification.

H0: Engineering SMEs do not classify a unique Brand Identity and Brand Promise to build Brand Loyalty.

H1: Engineering SMEs classify a unique brand identity and brand promise to build brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 2 explores whether Engineering SMEs formulate a Brand Positioning Strategy to build their Brand Loyalty, contrasting the null hypothesis proposing the lack of such a strategy.

H02: Engineering SMEs do not formulate a Brand Positioning Strategy to build their Brand Loyalty.

H2: Engineering SMEs formulate a Brand Positioning Strategy to build their Brand Loyalty.

In conclusion, this research methodology establishes a robust framework for exploring the relationship between Brand Promise, Brand Positioning and Brand Loyalty in the competitive B2B landscape. By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches and advanced statistical analyses, the study seeks to uncover nuanced insights into how engineering SMEs strategically position and communicate their Brand promises to enhance Brand loyalty. The comprehensive methodology ensures a thorough examination and interpretation of research findings, contributing valuable insights to understanding brand dynamics in B2B relationships.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discourse examines the ramifications of these results, investigating how a steadfast brand commitment fosters a favourable brand allegiance within the business-to-business domain. Furthermore, this study may provide practical recommendations for businesses aiming to strengthen brand loyalty in the highly competitive B2B sector by analyzing particular factors that facilitate or impede the fulfilment of brand promises among the analyzed SMEs.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis assessed the relationship between independent variables (unique brand identity, brand values, and unique brand promise) and the dependent variable (brand loyalty) within engineering SMEs. Findings indicated a significant positive correlation, suggesting that unique brand identity and promise positively influence brand loyalty in this context.

Regression analysis and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) are vital statistical tools for understanding relationships and differences in data. Regression helps quantify the impact of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable, providing insights into complex relationships. It's invaluable for predicting outcomes and identifying significant predictors in diverse scenarios.

On the other hand, ANOVA assesses variations between group means, aiding in comparing multiple groups and determining if observed differences are statistically significant. Regression analysis and ANOVA empower researchers to uncover patterns, make predictions, and draw meaningful conclusions from multifaceted datasets, enhancing the depth of statistical understanding and decision-making.

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Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.977 ^a	0.955	0.954	0.396

The model summary for the regression analysis is provided in the table. The model's correlation coefficient, denoted as Model 1, is notably high at 0.977, indicating the presence of a robust linear association. The R Square value of 0.955 signifies that the independent variable accounts for 95.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. When the number of predictors is accounted for, the Adjusted R Square remains at 0.954. Indicative of the precision of prediction

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1227.859	9	136.429	872.036	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.355	373	0.156		
	Total	1286.214	382			

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.102	0.127		0.804	0.422
	The Brand Logo as a tagline summarizing the core benefit to the customer.	-0.033	0.01	-0.037	-3.234	0.001
	The Brand is recognized for values like trustworthiness, quality, reliability, fairness, professionalism, cost-effectiveness, etc.	-0.012	0.009	-0.016	-1.312	0.19
	The Brand has a specific promise to deliver the core value proposition, which is fulfilled.	0.032	0.014	0.033	2.321	0.021
	Company brochures, Product brochures, emails, Technical Catalogues, Presentations, etc., are professionally done and carry a very high & lasting impact.	-0.019	0.011	-0.019	-1.685	0.093
	The company website is professionally done and carries a very high & lasting impact.	0.575	0.053	0.505	10.862	0
	The company website is frequently updated and covers all the information about your brand offerings.	0.018	0.018	0.015	0.996	0.32
	The SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is implemented consistently to have better search rankings on Google & other search portals.	-0.314	0.026	-0.325	-11.882	0
	The company's social media pages exist and are updated consistently and professionally.	0.464	0.057	0.467	8.143	0
	The company's employees know the Brand Identity, Brand Promise, Brand Positioning, etc.	0.205	0.037	0.25	5.477	0

a. Dependent Variable: Clear and concise Brand Promise and Brand Positioning boost the desired Brand perception.

The outcomes of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the coefficients of a model assessing the influence of different factors on the dependent variable are displayed in the table. "Clear and concise Brand Promise and Brand Positioning boost the desired Brand perception." The analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveals a statistically significant overall model fit (F=872.036, p=.000), indicating that the predictors account for a substantial portion of the variability observed in the dependent variable. The

coefficients table offers valuable insights into the contributions made by each predictor. Significantly, variables including a proficiently designed organization website (B=0.505, p=0), successful implementation of search engine optimization (B=-0.325, p=0), and employee consciousness (B=0.25, p=0) exhibit correlations with brand perception that are statistically significant.

In light of the stated hypotheses, the findings support H1: "The engineering SMEs classify a unique brand identity and brand promise to build brand loyalty." The positive coefficients associated with variables such as employee awareness and a well-designed website are consistent with the hypothesis that a distinct brand promise positively impacts brand perception.

Hypothesis 2

H02: Engineering SMEs do not formulate a Brand Positioning Strategy to build their Brand Loyalty.

H2: Engineering SMEs formulate a Brand Positioning Strategy to build their Brand Loyalty.

Regression analysis examines the relationships between variables, such as Brand Loyalty, Competitor Analysis, and Unique Set of Benefits. It allows quantifying the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable, aiding in understanding how changes in one variable correspond to changes in another.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) complements regression by assessing the significance of differences among group means. Together, they provide statistical rigour, helping to validate hypotheses and make informed decisions based on data. It is crucial in determining the influence of Competitor Analysis and Unique Set of Benefits on Brand Loyalty in engineering SMEs' brand positioning strategy.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591 ^a	0.349	0.346	1.488

The regression model's summary is provided in the table. With an R-value of 0.591, the model demonstrates a moderately positive correlation. The R Square value of 0.349 indicates that the independent variable accounts for 34.9% of the variability observed in the dependent variable. Std. Error of the Estimate and Adjusted R Square offer further insights regarding the model's fit.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	450.982	2	225.491	101.885	.000 ^b
	Residual	841.013	380	2.213		
	Total	1291.995	382			

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.914	0.207		14.055	.000
	Competitor analysis is done consistently in the focused market.	0.619	0.057	0.68	10.837	.000
	The Brand offers its customers a unique set of benefits amongst the competitors in the focused market.	-0.125	0.062	-0.126	-2.008	0.045

a. Dependent Variable: Consistent & well-planned Brand Management practices build Brand Loyalty.

The regression coefficients and outcomes of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) concerning the influence of consistent and well-planned brand management practises on brand loyalty in engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are displayed in the table. Based on the ANOVA results (F = 101.885, p < 0.05), it can be concluded that the independent variables make a substantial contribution towards elucidating the variability observed in brand loyalty. In greater detail, the table of coefficients delineates the influence of specific predictors. Consistent competitor analysis appears to be a factor in fostering brand loyalty, as indicated by the significant and positive correlation (B = 0.619, p < 0.05) between competitor analysis and brand loyalty. On the contrary, the variable associated with providing

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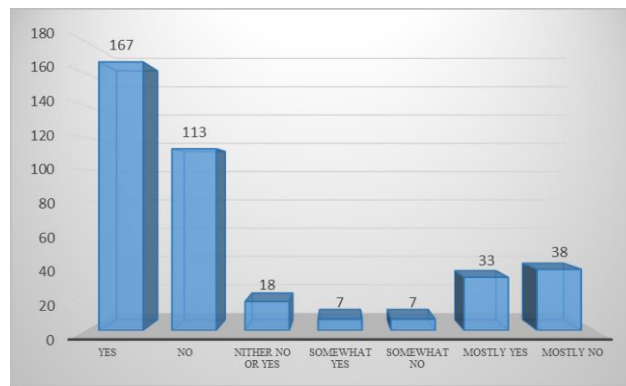
distinctive advantages demonstrates an inverse correlation ($B = -0.125, p < 0.05$).

To the hypotheses, the results offer corroboration for H2: Engineering SMEs devise a brand positioning strategy to cultivate brand loyalty, given that examining competitors positively impacts brand loyalty. Nevertheless, H02 is not accepted, which suggests that engineering SMEs do develop a brand positioning strategy. The findings highlight the significance of competitive analysis in engineering SMEs' brand management practices to cultivate customer loyalty.

Descriptive analysis

Five independent variables play a pivotal role in the analysis of brand loyalty. A unique brand identity distinguishes a brand, contributing to customer recognition and connection. Brand values, the second variable, shape customer perceptions and influence loyalty. The third factor, a unique brand promise, sets expectations and fosters trust. Competitor analysis, the fourth variable, provides insights into market dynamics and aids strategic positioning. Lastly, a unique set of benefits, the fifth variable, enhances a brand's appeal and reinforces customer commitment. Understanding the interplay of these factors is essential for comprehending and fostering brand loyalty, a critical dependent variable in the competitive landscape.

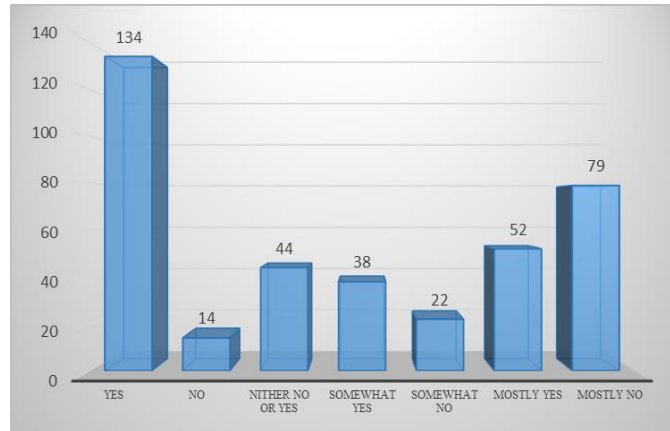
Unique brand identity



The Brand Logo as a tagline summarizing the core benefit to the customer.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	167	43.6	43.6	43.6
	No	113	29.5	29.5	73.1
	Neither No or Yes	18	4.7	4.7	77.8
	Somewhat Yes	7	1.8	1.8	79.6
	Somewhat No	7	1.8	1.8	81.5
	Mostly Yes	33	8.6	8.6	90.1
	Mostly No	38	9.9	9.9	100
	Total	383	100	100	

The responses to the question of whether consumers consider the brand logo to be a tagline that encapsulates the primary benefit are presented in the table. Out of a total of 383 participants, 43.6% categorically confirmed this correlation ("Yes"), whereas 29.5% refuted it ("No"). A minority (4.7%) of respondents were undecided ("Neither No nor Yes"). Furthermore, individuals who indicated a limited affiliation were classified into distinct groups: those who responded: "Somewhat Yes" (1.8%), "Somewhat No" (1.8%), "Mostly Yes" (8.6%), and "Mostly No" (9.9%). The data presented offers valuable insights into the varied perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the brand logo's messaging.

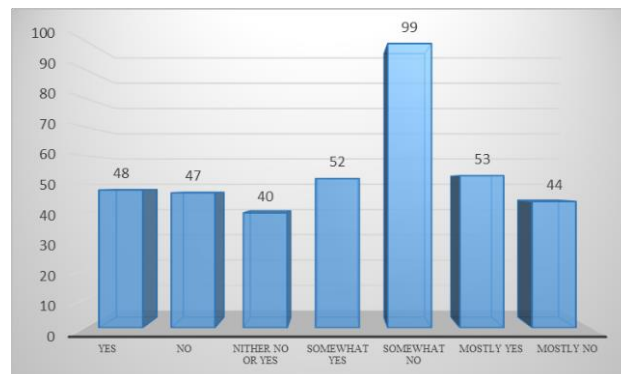
Brand values



The Brand is recognized for values like trustworthiness, quality, reliability, fairness, professionalism, cost-effectiveness, etc.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	134	35	35	35
	No	14	3.7	3.7	38.6
	Neither No or Yes	44	11.5	11.5	50.1
	Somewhat Yes	38	9.9	9.9	60.1
	Somewhat No	22	5.7	5.7	65.8
	Mostly Yes	52	13.6	13.6	79.4
	Mostly No	79	20.6	20.6	100
	Total	383	100	100	

The respondents' perceived brand values are presented in the table under the following headings: "Cost-Effective," "Fair," "Quality," and "Reliability," as well as "Trustworthy." A lesser proportion (3.7%) did not unequivocally acknowledge these values ("No"), whereas the majority (35%) fully believed them ("Yes"). Significantly, 11.5% of respondents neither confirmed nor refuted these values. The responses from the 383 respondents, which represented varying degrees of agreement ("Somewhat Yes," "Somewhat No") and stronger agreement ("Mostly Yes," "Mostly No"), combined to form a comprehensive view of brand perception.

Unique Brand Promise

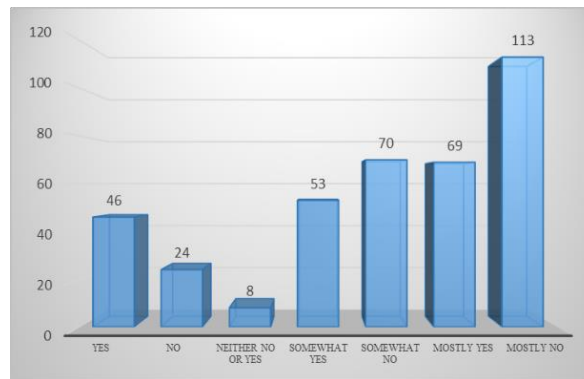


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The Brand has a specific promise to deliver the core value proposition, which is fulfilled.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	12.5	12.5	12.5
	No	47	12.3	12.3	24.8
	Neither No or Yes	40	10.4	10.4	35.2
	Somewhat Yes	52	13.6	13.6	48.8
	Somewhat No	99	25.8	25.8	74.7
	Mostly Yes	53	13.8	13.8	88.5
	Mostly No	44	11.5	11.5	100
	Total	383	100	100	

The table displays the survey results that evaluated the extent to which a brand's fundamental value proposition was realized. 12.5% of the 383 respondents were adamant that the Brand fulfilled its commitment, whereas 12.3% were opposed. Significantly, 25.8% of respondents felt the Brand falls short to some degree, whereas 13.8% largely concurred with fulfilling the Brand's promises. The aggregated percentages indicate a varied viewpoint, as a significant portion (10.4%) expresses uncertainty. The data generally shows diverse perspectives concerning the extent to which the Brand adheres to its fundamental value proposition.

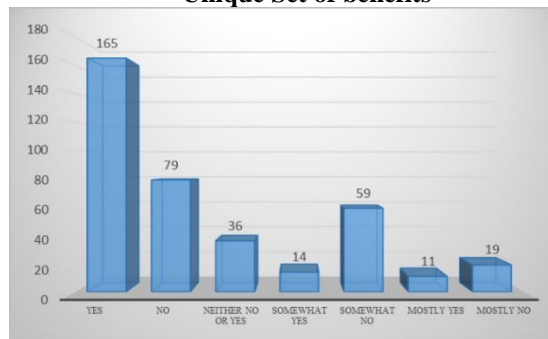
Competitor analysis



Competitor analysis is done consistently in the focused market.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	12	12	12
	No	24	6.3	6.3	18.3
	Neither No or Yes	8	2.1	2.1	20.4
	Somewhat Yes	53	13.8	13.8	34.2
	Somewhat No	70	18.3	18.3	52.5
	Mostly Yes	69	18	18	70.5
	Mostly No	113	29.5	29.5	100
	Total	383	100	100	

The table illustrates an exhaustive examination of competitors within a specific market, incorporating 383 participants. Significantly, 6.3% do not consistently conduct such analyses, whereas 12% do. Moreover, a minority of 13.8% positively participate in competitor analysis, while 18.3% do so negatively. A considerable proportion, 29.5%, largely abstains from the rival analysis. The data presents a range of methodologies employed by market participants, highlighting the different levels of dedication to evaluating competitors. As a result, valuable insights can be gained regarding the strategic business practices prevalent in the market under investigation.

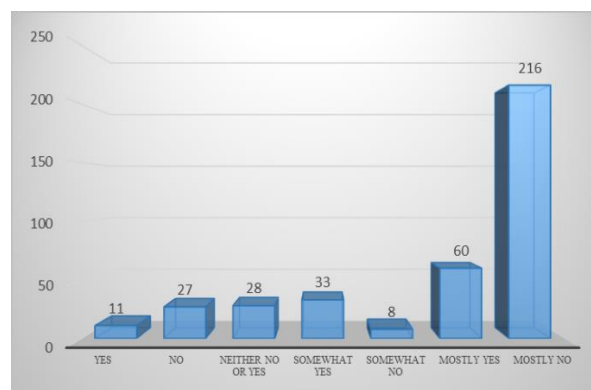
Unique Set of benefits



The Brand offers its customers a unique set of benefits amongst the competitors in the focused market.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	165	43.1	43.1	43.1
	No	79	20.6	20.6	63.7
	Neither No or Yes	36	9.4	9.4	73.1
	Somewhat Yes	14	3.7	3.7	76.8
	Somewhat No	59	15.4	15.4	92.2
	Mostly Yes	11	2.9	2.9	95
	Mostly No	19	5	5	100
	Total	383	100	100	

In the targeted market, the table depicts a particular brand's perceived benefits compared to its competitors. A significant proportion of participants (43.1%) confirm that the Brand provides distinct benefits. In contrast, 9.4% are neutral and 20.6% are opposed. The responses indicating a degree of agreement are as follows: 15.4% of respondents disagree, while 3.7% somewhat agree. A lesser percentage (2.9%) is essentially in agreement, while 5% is largely opposed. In conclusion, a considerable proportion of participants recognize the unique advantages of the Brand; however, there are a variety of viewpoints among the respondents.

Brand Loyalty

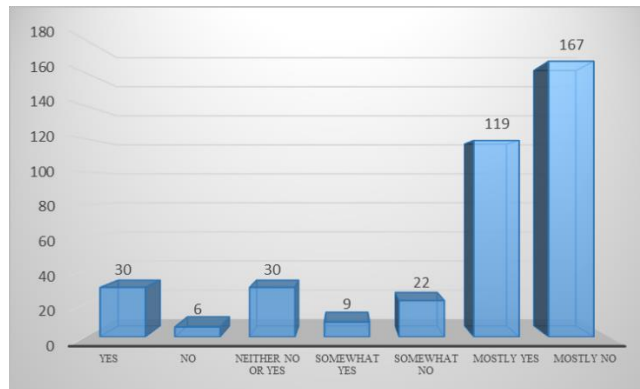


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Clear and concise Brand Promise and Brand Positioning boost the desired Brand perception.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	2.9	2.9	2.9
	No	27	7	7	9.9
	Neither No or Yes	28	7.3	7.3	17.2
	Somewhat Yes	33	8.6	8.6	25.8
	Somewhat No	8	2.1	2.1	27.9
	Mostly Yes	60	15.7	15.7	43.6
	Mostly No	216	56.4	56.4	100
	Total	383	100	100	

Responses to the influence of brand positioning and a clear and concise brand promise on the intended brand perception are presented in the table. 2.9% of 383 respondents confirmed that such communication enhanced perception, whereas 7% expressed disagreement and 7.3% maintained a neutral stance. In addition, 15.7% of respondents largely concurred, while 2.1% disagreed and 8.6% partially agreed. A substantial majority, accounting for 56.4%, primarily expressed dissent. The results of this study underscore the significant importance of a clearly defined brand promise and positioning in influencing favourable brand perception, as evidenced by the considerable concurrence in the "Mostly Yes" classification.

Brand Management Practices



Consistent & well-planned Brand Management practices build the Brand Loyalty.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	7.8	7.8	7.8
	No	6	1.6	1.6	9.4
	Neither No or Yes	30	7.8	7.8	17.2
	Somewhat Yes	9	2.3	2.3	19.6
	Somewhat No	22	5.7	5.7	25.3
	Mostly Yes	119	31.1	31.1	56.4
	Mostly No	167	43.6	43.6	100
	Total	383	100	100	

The table shows that 7.8% of respondents agree that consistent and well-planned brand management practices foster brand loyalty. On the contrary, 1.6% refute this correlation. It is worth noting that 31.1% of respondents strongly believe in the positive impact ("Mostly Yes"), whereas 43.6% hold the contrary view ("Mostly No"). A considerable percentage of respondents (19.6%) recognize a tenuous correlation ("Somewhat Yes"), whereas 5.7% convey skepticism ("Somewhat No"). Based on the opinions of 383 respondents regarding the correlation between brand management practices and brand loyalty, the results indicate a wide array of viewpoints.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.904	13

The table presents reliability statistics for a measurement tool, indicating a high internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.904. The tool comprises 13 items, suggesting strong reliability in measuring the construct of interest, as higher Cronbach's Alpha values generally reflect greater reliability and consistency among items.

FINDINGS**Brand Identity & Promise:**

The analysis of brand identity and promise uncovers a wide range of viewpoints from the participants. Descriptive analysis emphasizes the significance of symbolic and visual elements in conveying the essence of the Brand. Variable in effectiveness, brand logos are correlated with the primary benefit according to 29.5% of respondents, while 43.6% confirm this correlation. Moreover, a considerable percentage (35%) demonstrates an awareness of the Brand's principles, suggesting a holistic perspective on brand perception.

Brand Positioning Strategy:

The implementation of brand positioning strategies is of paramount importance in achieving differentiation and market significance. The analysis findings reveal that respondents hold diverse opinions concerning the influence of a well-designed company website, effective search engine optimization (SEO) integration, and employee knowledge on brand perception. The results are consistent with the postulation that engineering SMEs utilize a distinct brand identity and pledge to cultivate brand allegiance.

Brand Loyalty:

This research investigates brand loyalty by examining the correlation between repeated purchases and emotional attachments. The opinions of the respondents regarding the fulfilment of the Brand's core value proposition are varied, with 25.8% identifying deficiencies and 13.8% predominantly agreeing with the fulfilment. The data highlights the imperative for organizations to comprehend and effectively respond to diverse viewpoints to strengthen consumer relationships and, as a result, foster brand loyalty.

Reliability Test:

The reliability test of the measurement tool indicates a high internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.904. This suggests a robust and reliable tool comprising 13 items for measuring the construct of interest. The high reliability underscores the accuracy and consistency of the tool in assessing various aspects related to brand identity, promise, and positioning.

Hypothesis Testing:

Hypothesis 1 is validated by the regression analysis, which indicates that engineering SME brand loyalty is increased via employee awareness, a well-designed website, and efficient SEO. The research validates the significance of a distinct brand promise in influencing favourable brand perception. Hypothesis 2 posits that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) strategically utilize brand positioning as a means to foster customer loyalty; in this regard, "Competitor analysis" and "Unique benefits" exert a substantial impact on brand perception. Effective branding strategies in the highly competitive business-to-business (B2B) sector necessitate a comprehensive comprehension of brand identity, promise, positioning, and loyalty. The research findings offer actionable insights that can be utilized by organizations seeking to strengthen brand loyalty.

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CONCLUSION

In summary, thoroughly examining brand loyalty in the business-to-business (B2B) industry yields significant knowledge regarding the intricate dynamics of elements that impact consumer attitudes and allegiance to particular brands. The research's emphasis on brand identity and promise highlights the significance of symbolic and visual aspects in conveying the fundamental nature of a brand. Diverse viewpoints regarding the efficacy of brand logos and the recognition of brand values underscore the intricate character of consumer perceptions, underscoring the necessity for customized branding approaches in the business-to-business sector. Analyzing brand positioning strategies demonstrates that they are crucial for market significance and differentiation.

The variance in viewpoints regarding the effects of a meticulously crafted website, effective search engine optimization (SEO), and knowledgeable employees highlights the intricate nature of brand positioning and its association with positive brand perception. The results validate that engineering SMEs establish a distinct brand identity to foster customer loyalty. The investigation into brand loyalty encompasses sentimental attachments and repeated purchases, presenting various viewpoints regarding realizing brand commitments.

The research underscores the criticality for businesses to understand and respond to these diverse perspectives to strengthen consumer connections and cultivate brand allegiance. The reliability test validates the measurement instrument's robustness, instilling confidence in its precision and uniformity when evaluating constructs associated with brands. Moreover, validating the importance of unique brand commitments and strategic placement in shaping positive brand perception through hypothesis testing provides additional direction for organizations striving to cultivate stronger brand allegiance. Fundamentally, the research offers intricate insights that surpass traditional metrics, thereby enhancing comprehension of the complex dynamics inherent in the business-to-business industry. These observations can provide a basis for organizations seeking to strengthen their brand strategies and increase customer loyalty in the fiercely competitive business-to-business sector.

FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

The research paper "The Importance of Brand Promise for Building Brand Loyalty in the B2B Segment: An Empirical Study of Engineering SMEs in Pune City" presents numerous opportunities for additional investigation and scholarly inquiry. Future research could potentially proceed in the following ways:

- This cross-industry analysis aims to examine the variations in the influence of brand promise on brand loyalty across diverse industries within the business-to-business sector. This research has the potential to yield significant findings regarding industry-specific determinants that impact brand loyalty among engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in contrast to other sectors.
- From a global standpoint, the research could be extended to encompass engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) situated in alternative locations, regions, or countries to evaluate the results' applicability. This may entail an examination of cultural and contextual elements that have the potential to impact the correlation between brand commitment and customer loyalty worldwide.
- Conducting longitudinal studies entails the systematic observation of temporal developments in brand loyalty. This may facilitate comprehension of the intricacies surrounding the dynamics of brand promise and its enduring influence on establishing and maintaining brand loyalty within the business-to-business sector.
- This study examines the impact of digital marketing strategies on forming and fulfilling brand promises within the business-to-business industry. Given the growing significance of online platforms, it may be critical to comprehend how digital channels contribute to brand promise and, consequently, brand loyalty.
- This study investigates the different touchpoints throughout the consumer journey and evaluates their contributions to the overarching brand promise. This may entail examining customer experiences across various phases, spanning from pre-purchase engagements to post-purchase involvements, aiming to identify pivotal touchpoints that foster brand loyalty.
- Investigating the internal perspective of employee perception and understanding of the brand promise within engineering SME organizations. The level of employee commitment and alignment with the brand promise can substantially influence its fulfilment and, as a result, brand loyalty.
- This study aims to investigate novel branding strategies that engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can implement to strengthen their brand promise and cultivate more devoted

customers. This may entail examining developing patterns in business-to-business (B2B) branding, including endeavours related to sustainability, ethical conduct in operations, or technological progressions.

- In light of the study's findings, provide engineering SMEs with actionable strategic recommendations. This may involve the creation of a guide or Set of tools to assist companies in bolstering their brand promise and, as a result, cultivating brand loyalty in the B2B sector.

LIMITATIONS

The initial limitation of the study is its specific concentration on engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pune City, which may restrict the applicability of the results to a broader range of industries or regions. Furthermore, the study's dependence on empirical data could be limited by the ever-changing character of business environments, which may introduce new influences on brand loyalty over time. An additional issue that may arise is sampling bias, which occurs when specific SMEs are not sufficiently represented. Moreover, the study might encounter constraints in comprehensively capturing the intricate dynamics among multiple factors influencing brand loyalty within the business-to-business sector. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research offers significant contributions by illuminating the strengths and weaknesses of brand loyalty and promise pertaining to engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pune City.

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