

METHODOLOGY

BRAND TRUST REPORT 2023



In today's complex and ever-changing business landscape, trust is a critical component that can make or break a brand's success. However, trust is not a simple, one-dimensional concept. Rather, it is a complex, multifaceted framework of expectations that consumers use to judge a brand's reliability, ethics, and overall reputation. At the initial stages of trust formation, consumers may only expect a brand to deliver goods and services reliably and on time. However, as trust grows over time, consumers' expectations tend to become more generalized and encompass a wider range of factors, including a brand's treatment of workers, its environmental impact, and its contributions to society.

At TRA, we understand that trust is a crucial aspect of consumer behaviour, and we have spent years researching how the makeup of the human mind, society, culture, and communication impacts trust. This research has led us to develop an intricate Brand Trust Matrix, which includes 61 Brand Attributes, 10 Brand Behaviours, and 3 Foundations of Trust. This matrix forms the basis of our primary syndicated research study, which we conduct in 16 Indian cities with thousands of consumer-influencers each year. The research provides every brand with a quotient for Brand Trust, which is calculated using Indian Statistical Institute's specially created formula for TRA's Brand Trust matrix.

As guardians of trust, we are dedicated to preserving the integrity, methodology, and rigor of our report. Numerous brands utilize our research findings to understand their customers' trust perceptions and to showcase their trustworthiness to their target audience. Over 200 brands have used our "Power of Trust" symbol as a mark of assurance, and a similar number have leveraged the consumer insights on Brand Trust provided by our studies.

This year's TRA's Brand Trust Report is particularly noteworthy given the long-tail impact of the global pandemic and the rise of technology in business and consumer behaviour. The pandemic has had a significant long-term impact on consumers' priorities and perceptions of what truly matters. Consumers are now placing a greater emphasis on brands that prioritize their well-being, social responsibility, and environmental impact.

At the same time, the world is experiencing a rapid shift towards AI, with many businesses actively vying for attention and market share. The use of AI in consumer behaviour has allowed brands to offer personalized experiences and streamline operations, but it has also brought about new challenges related to privacy, security, and ethical use of data. As a result, businesses must navigate this changing landscape to build and maintain trust with their customers.

Against this backdrop, TRA's Brand Trust Report offers a valuable snapshot of India's 1000 most trusted brands. One of the most significant findings from this year's report is the importance of transparency and social responsibility in building consumer trust. As we move forward into an uncertain future, trust will continue to be a critical factor in the success of businesses. Brands that prioritize clarity, reliability, and social responsibility will be better positioned to earn and maintain the trust of their customers, while those that fail to do so may struggle to survive in a highly competitive market.

At TRA, we remain committed to helping brands understand and navigate the complex landscape of trust, and to providing them with the insights and tools they need to build and maintain lasting relationships with their customers.



UNDERSTANDING THE BRAND TRUST COMPONENTS

Attempting to quantify something as universal as Trust was not without challenges. The matrix and the study's methodology were under everyone's glare. The science of the Brand Trust Matrix had to be proven and its universal applicability had to be explained, and with perseverance, most of our clients use it as their most important brand metric.

Brand Trust is layered into Brand Trust Attributes, Brand Trust Behaviours and Brand Trust Archetypes. These can be understood as messages, personality and foundations of trust that the brand exudes.

A brief explanation of the foundations is given below:

Brand Trust Foundation	Explanation
Building Capacity to Trust	An environment of Trust is essential for Trustor to assume the necessary vulnerability needed for the trust bond to form. The essential need of this foundation is that the brand must emanate messages and signals that make stakeholder feel comfortable to let their guard down. It has to emerge from a perceived genuineness of the brand. The Brand Behaviours that make up this foundation are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Non-Threatening Ambience ·Shared Interest ·Display Empathy
Creating Perception of Positive Intent	To reinforce consumer trust, brands should display that their intent is benign. The energetic vibe of optimism attracts consumers towards it. Consumers are constantly recalibrating the intent of brands, and small behavioural slips can make them rescure their trust. On the other hand, brands that display their positive intent over long periods of time inevitably beget consumer trust. Perception of a brand's positive intent reflects in three Brand Behaviours which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Demonstrated Sincerity ·Altruism ·Enthusiasm
Demonstrating Relevant Competence	The Third Foundation of trust highlights the importance of consumers assessing a brand on its ability to fulfil their tangible expectations. Brands need to display their competence and expertise to garner consumer trust by successfully carrying out the promise they claim. By doing so they prove to be worthy for the position they hold. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Outward Appearance ·Perceived Competence ·Commanding Respect ·Accepting Responsibility

DESIGNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A well-designed questionnaire is crucial to any good syndicated research. Even more so, when the study is attempting to capture consumer perceptions on something as subtle as Brand Trust.

The Brand Trust Questionnaire has three parts to it:

A. Recall Quotient:

Each respondent was asked to name five of local, national, and international brands that came to mind. This allowed the interviewer to bring out several brands from the respondent's active memory along with their free associations, as well as reduced selective channelization. While this part of the questionnaire had no implication on the Brand Trust Index, by power of association, it made the actual brand response on Brand Trust more stratified.

B. Sub-Conscious Brand Trust Quotient:

In the second part of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to name three brands most suited to each of the 10 Brand Behaviours of Trust. Further, they were then asked to give a suitability score for each brand on a 5-point scale for the Brand Behaviour mentioned. Finally, the respondents gave the category of the brand mentioned. This part of the response is called Sub-conscious trust because the respondents consciously may not be aware that these Brand Behaviours make up trust.

C. Conscious Trust Quotient:

In the third part of the questionnaire, responses recalled in response to 'Most Trusted Brand Name' helped extract conscious trust exhibited by respondents. As in the previous part, respondents also provided the brand's category and a suitability score on a 5-point scale, corresponding to a numeric value for the brand's trustworthiness.



FINDING THE RIGHT RESPONDENTS

The respondents of this study are the consumer-influencers of brands, the 10% of the consumers that exert influence on the remaining 90% in their brand decisions. To ensure that the study captured the perceptions of consumer influencers, several distinguishing criteria were set. Also, three distinct sets of respondents who have an influence on brands was chosen for the study.

The three major groups of respondents were Salaried Males, Salaried Females and Home Influencers. The other criteria for selection of the respondents were as under:

General criteria

- Age criteria – 21 to 50 years
- SEC – A / B only

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Home influencer criteria

- English & one local/ regional language proficiency with above 3 out of 5 score on speak, read & write Home influencer influence score to be 4 out of 5 in each of the below criteria

Purchasing electronic item/s at their home

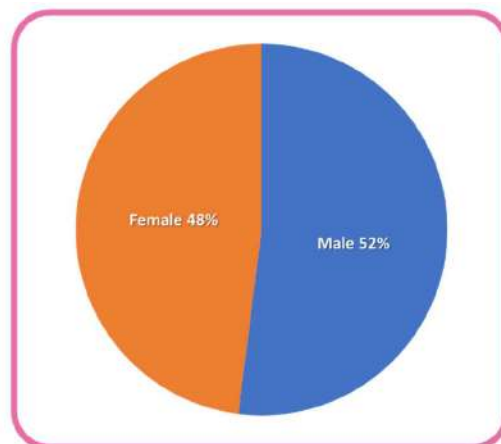
Recommendation on branded products purchase done by their friends

Selection on the next education institution of her child/ward

Residing in a society with 100 or more flats

For salaried respondents

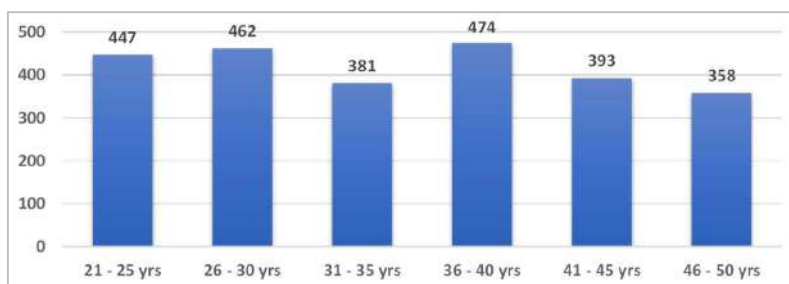
- Monthly salary income more than INR 20,000/-
- Must be employed in an organization having more than 200 employees across branches (pan-India)
OR
must be employed in an organization having more than INR 50 Crores turnover
- Must not be employed with a courier company, Public Relations, Market Research, Advertising, BPO, or KPO
- Not more than 15 interviews to be conducted in any one organization across its offices in India



SAMPLING CRITERIA

A. Gender and age-based criteria

The total gender and age sampling was done on the basis of the census division among the 16 cities. Among the women, the home influencers and salaried women were in the ratio 65% &35% respectively.



B. City-based criteria

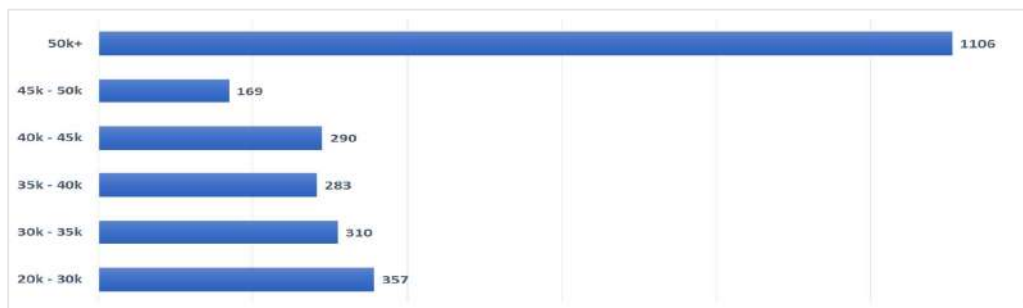
16 cities were considered for the survey, representative of urban India. The number of respondents sampled in each city depended on the GDP of the city, as it was most representative of transactions in the city.

North	Delhi, Lucknow Chandigarh, Jaipur
East	Kolkata, Guwahati
West	Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Indore
South	Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Kochi

Derived respondent demographics

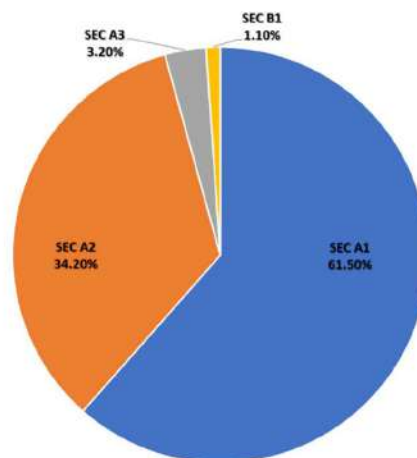
A) Income-based demographics

The respondents had a monthly income exceeding INR 20,000 as shown by the graph of income distribution given below



B) SEC based criteria

1547 (61.5%) respondents were from SEC A1, 34.2% were SEC A2, 3.2% respondents were from SEC A3 and 1.1% were from SEC B1



COLLECTING THE DATA

The fieldwork was conducted between 15th December 2022 and 5th March 2023, by more than 300 fieldwork personnel. Each interview took an average of 45 minutes, thus adding up to more than 2500 hours of total research time. Nearly 30 million data points were collected and over 2,000+ unique brands emerged from the study.

Due to the evolving circumstances, conducting face-to-face interviews increased health risks for interviewers as well as respondent. In addition, travel restrictions and social distancing measures made fieldwork challenging and where physical interviews were not possible, telephonic interviews were conducted.

TRA surveys were conducted using an app specifically created for the purpose. Not only does it capture brand data more accurately than Paper-and-Pen-Interview (PAPI), but it also captures several parts of the interview that facilitate

- Respondent authentication
- Voice Recognition
- Geo-Location
- Time stamping

TRA insists on data accuracy with multiple level of scrutiny. Interviewers' testing, process quality, 100% back-checks, stringent quotas, data inspection at multiple levels, all of which ensured extremely high scrutiny.

MEASURING THE BRAND TRUST INDEX [BTI]

The Brand Trust Index® is a subtle measure of Brand Trust and takes into account the overt and covert Brand Trust influences – those aspects of Brand Trust that normally remain hidden from scrutiny.

The three measured parameters on Brand Trust were:

- a) **Frequency** – number of times a brand gets mentioned across all the interviews
- b) **Position** – the average position that the brand was mentioned on - first, second or third, among the three brands asked for each brand query
- c) **Suitability** – the average suitability that the brand was given on a rating scale of one to five

This part of the Brand Trust Index® can be represented as:

$$\frac{SD_0}{SD_i} \times P_{5i} \times O_{5i} \times X_{5i} \times 0.5$$

The other direct and visible influence on Brand Trust® was the respondent's replies to the question on the Most Trusted Brands. Additionally, this parameter is also measured on the same three parameters as above and is multiplied by 0.67 to equate the five-point scale of conscious trust to the three-point scale of the sub-conscious trust. The second part of the Brand Trust equation can be represented as

$$P_{7i} \times O_{7i} \times X_{7i} \times 0.67 \times 0.5$$

The addition of these gave us the Brand Trust Index, represented by the following formula:

$$\frac{SD_0}{SD_i} \times P_{5i} \times O_{5i} \times X_{5i} + P_{7i} \times O_{7i} \times X_{7i} \times 0.67$$

Where:

SD0 represents overall brand suitability score standard deviation

SDi represents all ith brand suitability standard deviation

O5i represents ith brand occurrence frequency of the Brand Trust question

P5i represents ith brand average positions of Brand Trust question

X represents the ith brand average suitability 5i

O7 represents the brand frequency of occurrence of the Recall question

How brands use TRA's data and 'Power of Trust' symbols

A. Power of Trust' Symbol

Over 200 brands license the 'Power of Trust' symbol as sign of surety that their brand is trusted by consumers. The 'Power of Trust' symbol has been used in marketing communications of brands in ATL advertising, POP, product packaging, social media, email signatures, among other ways. The brands which feature as Most Trusted in many of TRA's reports, use it to profess the brand's ability to garner the trust of consumers in successive years.



B. Consumer Insights Report

Several brands commission TRA for the consumer insights analysis called Buying Propensity Report as intricate insights are available in the syndicated study. Some brands have used the Buying Propensity report to discuss future-relevant strategies, while some investment bankers and PE funds use this data to make investment decisions in other brands. The applications of the Buying Propensity are only limited by the imagination of the brand.

C. Introspective Intervention

The most interesting part of the application of TRA's Brand Trust methodology has been when brands have commissioned TRA for doing a bespoke study with the brand's stakeholders using 'The Brand Trust Matrix' to bring recommendations to align internal actions to stakeholder Trust.

D. Brand Counsel

TRA helps brands align their external brand and communication initiatives to Trust, Desire and Buying Propensity, creating Trust Audits for agencies to ensure all messages are aligned to gaining better brand trust, by giving the brand a complete consumer-centric approach.