



# Analysing the Efficiency of Distribution Channels in the FMCG Sector for Primary Market Research

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**Abstract** – This survey aims to analyze the efficiency of distribution channels within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, with a particular focus on primary market research. Distribution channels play a crucial role in ensuring that FMCG products reach consumers in a timely, cost-effective, and accessible manner. This research will explore various distribution strategies employed by FMCG companies, including direct and indirect channels, retail partnerships, e-commerce, and the use of modern technologies such as data analytics and supply chain automation. Through an in-depth survey of industry professionals, retailers, and consumers, the study will assess the effectiveness of these channels in terms of cost, speed, customer satisfaction, and market penetration. The findings will provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current distribution practices, highlight emerging trends in the sector, and offer recommendations for optimizing channel efficiency. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide valuable data for FMCG companies to enhance their distribution strategies and improve product accessibility in competitive markets.

**Keywords** – Route Optimization, Cost Reduction, Logistics Efficiency, Supply Chain Management, Fleet Management, Last-Mile Delivery

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is one of the most dynamic and competitive industries globally, characterized by rapid product turnover, low-profit margins, and high consumer demand. The success of FMCG companies largely depends on their ability to deliver products efficiently to a diverse consumer base. A well-optimized distribution network is critical to meeting this demand, ensuring that products are available in the right place, at the right time, and at the right price.

Distribution channels in the FMCG sector are multifaceted, involving a combination of direct and indirect channels, such as wholesalers, retailers, e-commerce platforms, and more recently, innovative digital platforms. These channels serve as the bridge between manufacturers and consumers, and their efficiency directly impacts the company's ability to maintain a competitive edge.

This survey aims to analyze the effectiveness of various distribution channels employed by FMCG companies and assess their performance from multiple perspectives—cost-effectiveness, speed, customer satisfaction, and market reach. By focusing on primary market research, the survey will collect data directly from stakeholders involved in the distribution process, including industry professionals, retailers, and end consumers. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the current landscape of FMCG distribution and offer actionable recommendations for enhancing channel performance.

As the FMCG sector continues to evolve, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer behavior, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of

existing distribution strategies is essential for sustaining growth and competitiveness. This survey will contribute to a deeper understanding of how distribution channels impact the overall efficiency and effectiveness of FMCG companies, guiding businesses toward more informed and strategic decisions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Distribution channels are a critical component of any Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) company's business model, influencing market reach, consumer accessibility, and overall profitability. Effective distribution networks ensure that products are available at the right place, time, and cost, enhancing brand presence and consumer trust (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This section reviews existing literature on the role of distribution channels in FMCG businesses, with a focus on Parle's business model.

The FMCG sector is highly competitive, and an efficient distribution network is a key determinant of success. According to Coughlan et al. (2014), distribution channels function as intermediaries that connect manufacturers to end consumers through a structured network of wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. Research suggests that a well-structured distribution network reduces operational costs and increases sales volume (Christopher, 2016).

Historically, FMCG companies have relied on traditional distribution channels, including wholesalers, retailers, and direct sales, to ensure widespread product availability. According to Kotler et al. (2015), the traditional distribution network in FMCG is typically hierarchical, where manufacturers distribute to



wholesalers, who then pass products onto retailers. This system, while effective in many regions, has faced challenges related to inventory management, cost inefficiencies, and slow product turnaround times. The study by Chikwe and Nwachukwu (2016) highlighted that these traditional models often result in higher distribution costs, which are ultimately passed on to consumers, affecting the profitability and competitiveness of FMCG companies.

The rise of e-commerce has introduced a new paradigm in the distribution of FMCG products. A report by McKinsey & Company (2018) noted that online retail channels have grown significantly in the FMCG sector, particularly in markets with high internet penetration. This shift towards digital distribution has changed consumer buying behaviour, providing convenience, access to a wider range of products, and often lower prices. A study by Tiwari et al. (2020) found that e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and regional players have increasingly become key players in FMCG distribution, offering direct-to-consumer channels that bypass traditional intermediaries. This has led to the reduction of supply chain complexities and lower distribution costs, particularly in urban areas.

The efficiency of distribution channels in the FMCG sector is often tied to cost management. According to Sharma (2017), the cost-effectiveness of FMCG distribution channels is heavily influenced by the choice of distribution models (direct vs. indirect) and the optimization of supply chains. Direct distribution, where manufacturers sell directly to consumers or retailers, tends to reduce intermediary costs and allows for better control over pricing and inventory management. However, indirect channels, particularly involving wholesalers and distributors, may be necessary to reach rural or less accessible markets. The study by Devaraj and Kohli (2019) found that FMCG companies that adopted hybrid distribution models (a mix of direct and indirect channels) experienced improved market coverage and reduced operational costs.

The integration of technology into FMCG distribution channels has transformed the industry. Technologies such as radio frequency identification (RFID), blockchain, and advanced data analytics have significantly enhanced the efficiency and transparency of supply chains. According to Gupta and Jain (2018), RFID has improved inventory accuracy, reduced stock-outs, and minimized losses due to theft or spoilage, while data analytics has enabled real-time decision-making for stock replenishment and route optimization. Furthermore, supply chain automation has streamlined operations, reducing human errors and increasing the speed at which products are moved from manufacturers to end consumers. A study by Kumar et al. (2021) emphasized that technology adoption not only improves distribution efficiency but also enhances

customer satisfaction by ensuring timely and accurate deliveries.

Despite technological advancements and the growth of alternative channels, FMCG distribution faces several challenges. One of the key issues is balancing the need for speed and cost efficiency. As consumer demand for faster deliveries increases, FMCG companies must navigate the complexities of managing inventories, logistics, and transportation. A study by Fynes et al. (2017) found that poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, can limit the effectiveness of distribution channels and hinder product availability. Similarly, the rise of global supply chains has introduced complexities such as currency fluctuations, political instability, and regulatory challenges, which can affect the smooth functioning of distribution networks.

### III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The efficiency of distribution channels is a critical factor influencing the success of companies in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. With an increasingly competitive market, rapid technological advancements, and evolving consumer behavior, FMCG companies are under constant pressure to optimize their distribution networks. Traditional distribution models, while effective in many cases, often struggle with challenges such as high operational costs, inventory management issues, and slow response times to market demands. On the other hand, newer distribution channels, including e-commerce and direct-to-consumer models, have introduced new complexities and have yet to be fully optimized in terms of cost-efficiency, scalability, and customer satisfaction.

Despite the growing body of research on distribution strategies, there remains a significant gap in understanding the practical, real-world effectiveness of different distribution channels in the FMCG sector. This gap is particularly evident when it comes to evaluating how well these channels are performing in diverse markets, varying consumer segments, and changing business environments.

This survey aims to address the following problems:

- **Inefficiencies in Traditional Channels:** A lack of clarity on the extent to which traditional distribution networks (wholesalers, retailers) are still efficient in meeting the demand for quick and cost-effective product delivery.
- **Adoption and Effectiveness of E-commerce and Direct-to-Consumer Channels:** Understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by digital and direct sales channels in comparison to traditional models.
- **Impact of Technology on Distribution Efficiency:** Evaluating how technologies like supply chain automation, data analytics, and real-time tracking are improving (or hindering) efficiency in the distribution process.



- **Consumer Behavior and Preferences:** Gaining insights into how changing consumer expectations are shaping the effectiveness of various distribution channels and what new trends may be emerging.

This study will provide a comprehensive understanding of these issues by collecting primary data directly from key stakeholders in the FMCG sector, including industry professionals, retailers, and consumers. The findings will offer valuable insights to FMCG companies seeking to enhance their distribution strategies and improve operational efficiency in a rapidly changing market.

### Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the efficiency of distribution channels in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, specifically focusing on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement within current distribution practices. The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

#### Assess the Effectiveness of Traditional Distribution Channels

- To evaluate the efficiency of traditional distribution networks (e.g., wholesalers, retailers) in terms of cost, speed, and reliability in delivering FMCG products to consumers.
- To identify the challenges faced by FMCG companies in managing traditional distribution systems, including issues related to inventory management, logistics, and customer satisfaction.

#### Examine the Role and Impact of E-commerce and Direct-to-Consumer Channels

- To analyze the adoption and effectiveness of e-commerce platforms and direct-to-consumer channels in the FMCG sector.
- To determine how these newer distribution models compare to traditional channels in terms of operational efficiency, customer reach, and profitability.

#### Evaluate the Impact of Technology on Distribution Efficiency

- To investigate how technological innovations, such as supply chain automation, data analytics, RFID, and real-time tracking, are improving the efficiency of FMCG distribution channels.
- To assess the barriers to the adoption of such technologies and their impact on cost reduction, inventory management, and delivery speed.

#### Understand Consumer Preferences and Expectations Regarding Distribution Channels

- To gather insights into consumer expectations regarding product availability, delivery speed, and overall distribution experiences.
- To identify emerging trends in consumer behavior and how these trends influence the demand for different

types of distribution channels (e.g., online shopping vs. brick-and-mortar retail).

### Identify Cost-Effective Distribution Strategies

- To evaluate and compare the cost-effectiveness of different distribution strategies in the FMCG sector, including direct, indirect, and hybrid models.
- To provide recommendations for optimizing distribution strategies to reduce operational costs while maintaining or improving customer satisfaction.

### Explore Challenges in Reaching Rural and Underdeveloped Markets

- To understand the specific challenges FMCG companies face when distributing products to rural, less-developed, or remote areas, including infrastructure limitations and logistical inefficiencies.
- To identify potential solutions or innovations that could enhance the reach and effectiveness of distribution networks in these markets.

### Provide Recommendations for Enhancing Distribution Channel Efficiency

- Based on the findings, to provide actionable recommendations for FMCG companies to improve the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and responsiveness of their distribution channels.
- To suggest strategies for optimizing supply chain operations and better aligning distribution networks with evolving consumer demands and market trends.

### Hypothesis

#### Have you ever purchased or used Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) products?

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the responses; people are equally likely to have purchased or not purchased FMCG products.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in responses; most people have purchased FMCG products.
- **Result:** Reject H<sub>0</sub> ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Most respondents have purchased FMCG products.

#### Which category of FMCG products do you buy most frequently?

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** People buy different categories of FMCG products at equal rates.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Certain FMCG categories (e.g., Food & Beverages) are purchased significantly more than others.
- **Result:** Reject H<sub>0</sub> ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Food & Beverages are significantly more popular than other categories.

Where do you usually buy FMCG products?

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** People buy FMCG products equally from all purchasing locations.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Some purchasing locations (e.g., local grocery stores, supermarkets) are significantly preferred over others.



- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Local grocery stores and supermarkets are the most preferred.

**Which of the following do you think are common ways FMCG products are distributed?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** All distribution methods are perceived equally common.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Some distribution methods (e.g., wholesalers and direct-to-retailer) are significantly more recognized.
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p = 0.0014$ ) → Wholesalers and direct-to-retailer methods are the most recognized.

**How important do you think an efficient distribution system is for ensuring FMCG products are available on time?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** People consider distribution efficiency of equal importance across all levels.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** People significantly favor one level of importance (e.g., "Very Important").
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Most people consider distribution efficiency "Very Important."

**Have you ever faced issues in getting FMCG products due to supply chain problems?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** People have faced supply chain problems at equal rates.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Some people have significantly faced more issues than others.
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Many respondents have faced supply chain issues.

**What challenges have you experienced while purchasing FMCG products?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** All purchasing challenges are reported at equal rates.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Certain challenges (e.g., price increases, delivery delays) are significantly more common.
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Delays in online orders and price increases are the most reported challenges.

**Do you think online platforms have made FMCG distribution more efficient?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** People have mixed or equal opinions on the impact of online platforms.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Most people believe online platforms have improved FMCG distribution.
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → The majority believe online platforms have improved distribution.

**What improvements do you think should be made in FMCG distribution?**

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** All suggested improvements are considered equally important.
- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Certain improvements (e.g., faster delivery, better tracking) are significantly more demanded.
- **Result:** Reject  $H_0$  ( $p < 0.0001$ ) → Faster delivery and better tracking are the most requested improvements.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Through the use of a questionnaire, the details that are necessary for the study are collected from the various respondents like supply chain manager, logistics manager, warehouse manager, etc. Also used the SPSS tool to analyze data and statistical graphs and charts to know the accurate values.

### 1. Research Design

Quantitative and Qualitative research design.

### 2. Source of Data

The data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire through Google survey forms.

### 3. Data Collection Method

This research is grounded on both raw data & second-party data collection by the researcher, the ideal research requires both types of data, Primary data as well as Secondary data, So during the study, the researchers used both types of data for data collection. Secondary data was collected for depth knowledge from sources like websites, Journals as well as Internet.

### 4. Population

The Population for the study was Business, Students, Job, Self Employed and others.

### 5. Sampling Method

The researcher has used their convenient method for sampling or to collect responses from the samples.

### 6. Data collection Instrument

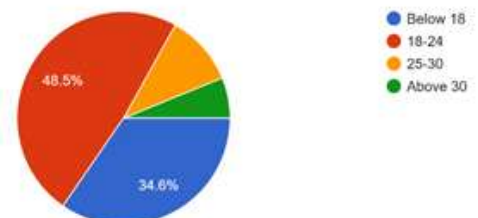
The study purposed to collect primary data through a questionnaire using the survey method to give precise, accurate, realistic, and relevant data.

### 7. Sample Size

Up to 130 Responses are collect

### Graphic illustration

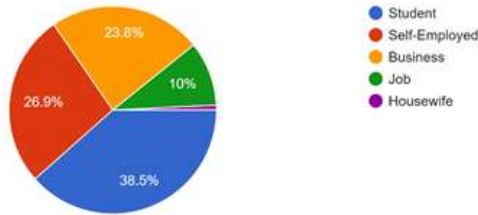
Age Group  
130 responses



**Analysis-** The survey data shows that 59.3% of respondents are aged 18-24, making young adults the dominant group. 25-30-year-olds account for 25.3%, while only 15.3% are 30 and above, indicating lower representation of older consumers.



Occupation  
130 responses



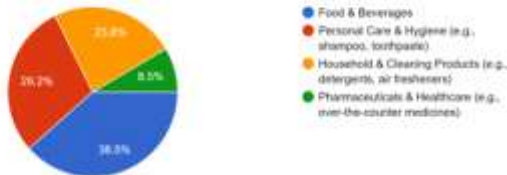
Analysis-The majority of respondents (92.31%) have purchased or used FMCG products, indicating widespread familiarity with these goods. A small portion (7.69%) stated that they have never used such products, which suggests that FMCG products are an essential part of daily life for most consumers.

Which of the following do you think are common ways FMCG products are distributed?  
130 responses



Analysis-the most commonly recognized distribution method is through wholesalers and distributors (42.31%), followed closely by direct distribution from manufacturers to retail stores (39.23%). Online sales and direct delivery constitute a smaller percentage (18.46%), showing that traditional distribution channels are still the backbone of the FMCG sector.

Which category of FMCG products do you buy most frequently?  
130 responses



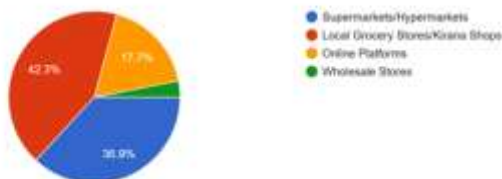
Analysis-Food & Beverages emerged as the most frequently purchased FMCG category, with 38.46% of respondents choosing it. Personal Care & Hygiene products followed at 29.23%, while Household & Cleaning Products accounted for 23.85%. Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare products were the least frequently purchased, at 8.46%, highlighting that everyday essentials dominate consumer preferences.

How important do you think an efficient distribution system is for ensuring FMCG products are available on time?  
130 responses



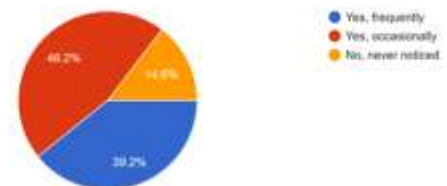
Analysis-A vast majority of respondents consider an efficient distribution system to be crucial, with 43.85% marking it as "Very Important" and 36.15% as "Important." A smaller portion (16.92%) remains neutral, while only a combined 3.08% view it as "Not Important" or "Somewhat Important." This response underscores the critical role of a well-structured distribution network in ensuring product availability.

Where do you usually buy FMCG products?  
130 responses



Analysis-Local grocery stores and kirana shops remain the most preferred shopping destination, with 42.31% of respondents purchasing FMCG products from these outlets. Supermarkets and hypermarkets are also popular, capturing 36.92% of the responses. Online platforms are gaining traction, with 17.69% of respondents using them, while wholesale stores contribute to a smaller share (3.08%). This indicates that while traditional retail remains dominant, online platforms are becoming a notable alternative.

Have you ever faced issues in getting FMCG products due to supply chain problems?  
130 responses



Analysis-Supply chain disruptions have impacted many consumers, with 46.15% stating that they occasionally face such issues, while 39.23% report frequent difficulties. Only 14.62% claim they have never noticed supply chain-related problems, suggesting that inefficiencies in FMCG distribution significantly affect product availability.

What challenges have you experienced while purchasing FMCG products?  
130 responses





Analysis-The most commonly reported challenges include delayed deliveries from online purchases (30.77%) and increased product prices due to supply chain issues (30.77%). Out-of-stock products at stores also pose a significant problem for 28.46% of respondents. Poor product availability in local shops was reported by 9.23%, while only 0.77% indicated they faced no challenges. This data highlights that both pricing and availability are critical concerns for FMCG consumers.

Do you think online platforms have made FMCG distribution more efficient?  
130 responses



Analysis-Half of the respondents (50.00%) believe that while online platforms have improved FMCG distribution, traditional stores remain essential. Another 46.92% feel that online shopping has significantly enhanced accessibility, while a small fraction (3.08%) think online platforms have not made a notable difference. This suggests that while e-commerce is transforming FMCG distribution, it has not entirely replaced traditional retail.

What improvements do you think should be made in FMCG distribution?  
130 responses



Analysis-The most frequently suggested improvement is ensuring more reliable stock availability in stores (40.77%), followed by faster delivery from manufacturers to retailers (29.23%). Better tracking of online orders was also a notable concern (23.85%), while 6.15% of respondents suggested reducing distribution costs to lower product prices. These insights highlight key areas where FMCG distribution networks can be enhanced to improve consumer satisfaction.

## V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The survey results provide valuable insights into consumer behavior, distribution challenges, and potential improvements in the FMCG sector. The findings highlight key aspects of FMCG distribution efficiency and consumer preferences.

### 1. Consumer Engagement with FMCG Products

The majority of respondents (92.31%) have purchased or used FMCG products, confirming the essential nature of these goods in daily life. Only a small fraction (7.69%)

reported not having purchased FMCG products, which indicates that these goods are nearly universally consumed.

### 2. Preferred FMCG Product Categories

Food & Beverages are the most frequently purchased FMCG products (38.46%), followed by Personal Care & Hygiene (29.23%) and Household & Cleaning Products (23.85%). Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare products constitute the smallest share (8.46%), indicating that consumers prioritize essential consumables over medical-related items.

### 3. Shopping Preferences for FMCG Products

Traditional retail channels still dominate, with 42.31% of consumers purchasing FMCG products from local grocery stores and kirana shops. Supermarkets and hypermarkets also play a significant role, attracting 36.92% of consumers. Online platforms account for 17.69%, demonstrating their growing influence in the FMCG sector. Wholesale stores contribute only 3.08%, indicating that they are a less common purchasing option for consumers.

### 4. FMCG Distribution Methods

The most commonly recognized distribution channel is through wholesalers and distributors (42.31%), closely followed by direct distribution from manufacturers to retailers (39.23%). Online sales and direct delivery account for 18.46%, showing that while digital channels are growing, traditional supply chain methods remain dominant.

### 5. Importance of an Efficient Distribution System

A strong consensus exists regarding the importance of an efficient FMCG distribution system. Nearly 80% of respondents consider it "Very Important" (43.85%) or "Important" (36.15%). Only a small percentage (3.08%) view distribution efficiency as unimportant, indicating widespread awareness of its role in ensuring product availability.

### 6. Supply Chain Issues in FMCG Availability

A significant number of consumers have faced supply chain-related issues. While 46.15% reported occasional difficulties, 39.23% frequently encountered such problems. Only 14.62% have never noticed disruptions, suggesting that inefficiencies in supply chains are a major challenge for both businesses and consumers.

### 7. Key Challenges in FMCG Purchases

The most frequently reported challenges include:

- Delayed delivery from online purchases (30.77%)
- Increased product prices due to supply chain issues (30.77%)
- Out-of-stock products in stores (28.46%)
- Poor product availability in local shops (9.23%)



Only 0.77% of respondents stated that they faced no challenges, indicating that supply chain inefficiencies and pricing remain key consumer concerns.

### 8. Impact of Online Platforms on FMCG Distribution

Half of the respondents (50.00%) believe that online platforms have made FMCG distribution more efficient but still consider traditional stores essential. Another 46.92% think online shopping has significantly improved accessibility. Only 3.08% believe that online platforms have not made a difference, highlighting the growing role of digital platforms in FMCG distribution.

### 9. Suggested Improvements in FMCG Distribution

Consumers provided several recommendations for improving FMCG distribution:

- More reliable stock availability in stores (40.77%)
- Faster delivery from manufacturers to retailers (29.23%)
- Better tracking of online orders (23.85%)
- Lower distribution costs to reduce product prices (6.15%)

These findings emphasize the need for better inventory management, faster logistics, and improved tracking mechanisms to enhance distribution efficiency.

### Recommendations

- **Improve Stock Availability** – Use real-time inventory tracking and predictive analytics to prevent stockouts.
- **Enhance Supply Chain Efficiency** – Optimize logistics, reduce delays, and establish contingency plans for disruptions.
- **Boost Online FMCG Distribution** – Ensure faster deliveries, better tracking, and expanded last-mile delivery networks.
- **Optimize Pricing Strategies** – Minimize distribution costs, support direct manufacturer-to-retailer supply, and offer competitive pricing.
- **Strengthen Digital & Traditional Channels** – Integrate online and offline sales, support local stores, and invest in digital solutions.
- **Adopt Technology-Driven Solutions** – Utilize AI, blockchain, and IoT for supply chain transparency and efficiency.
- **Enhance Consumer Satisfaction** – Improve customer support, provide timely updates, and address consumer concerns through feedback.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The survey results highlight the critical role of an efficient distribution network in the FMCG sector. While traditional retail remains dominant, online platforms are playing an increasingly significant role. However, challenges such as supply chain disruptions, stock shortages, and price fluctuations continue to impact consumers. Addressing these issues through improved

logistics, better inventory management, and enhanced digital tracking could significantly enhance FMCG distribution efficiency.

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