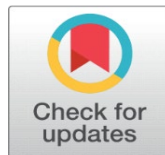
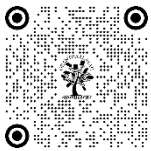


A STUDY ON BRAND PREFERENCE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY TOWARDS HOME APPLIANCES IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

In today's highly competitive market, brand preference and customer loyalty are crucial for the success of home appliance products. Consumers in this segment are presented with a wide array of brands and models, each offering distinct features and price points. Their purchasing decisions are shaped by factors such as product quality, price, durability, brand reputation, and after-sales service. This study investigates brand preferences and evaluates customer loyalty towards home appliances in Dharmapuri District. Using a structured questionnaire, primary data was collected from 250 respondents across the district. The results show that while brand awareness is widespread, consumers' preferences are primarily influenced by product quality and reliable service. Customer loyalty is closely linked to satisfaction, value for money, and consistent brand performance. The insights from this research can help marketers and manufacturers develop strategies to boost brand engagement and foster long-term loyalty in semi-urban markets.

Keywords: Brand Preference, Customer Loyalty, Home Appliances, Consumer Behavior, Dharmapuri District, Brand Awareness, Customer Satisfaction, After-Sales Service



1. INTRODUCTION

Home appliances have become an essential part of modern living, helping people manage household tasks more efficiently and comfortably. In today's fast-paced, consumer-driven society, the demand for appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, microwave ovens, and televisions has significantly increased. Factors like rising disposable incomes, urbanization, and changing lifestyles have contributed to the growing popularity of these products across India. As a result, the home appliance market has become highly competitive, with both Indian and international brands offering a wide range of options in terms of features, pricing, and quality.

When consumers make purchasing decisions, brand preference plays a crucial role. Many customers tend to favor certain brands due to their reputation, product quality, pricing, customer service, and overall user experience. Along with preference, customer loyalty is equally important—it reflects a consumer's tendency to continue buying from the same brand and recommending it to others. This loyalty helps businesses maintain consistent sales and build a reliable customer base.

Understanding brand preference and customer loyalty is vital for manufacturers and marketers. It allows them to develop effective strategies to attract new customers while retaining existing ones. In a district like Dharmapuri, where consumer behavior is influenced by income levels, product availability, and brand perception, studying these aspects becomes especially relevant.

This study aims to analyze brand preference and customer loyalty towards home appliances in Dharmapuri District. It seeks to identify the most preferred brands, understand consumer motivations, and assess loyalty patterns to help businesses better meet local consumer needs.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing brand preference and customer loyalty towards home appliances among consumers in Dharmapuri District. It aims to understand the factors that influence customers when choosing a particular brand and to assess their level of satisfaction and loyalty with those brands.

The research covers various categories of home appliances, including but not limited to refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, air conditioners, and kitchen appliances. The study is limited to individual consumers residing in urban and semi-urban areas of Dharmapuri District.

The scope includes:

- Identification of the most preferred home appliance brands among consumers.
- Analysis of the key factors influencing brand choice, such as price, quality, features, after-sales service, and brand image.
- Assessment of customer satisfaction and loyalty based on repeat purchases, brand recommendation, and trust.
- Evaluation of demographic influences (age, income, education, etc.) on brand preference and loyalty.

The findings of this study are expected to be useful for home appliance manufacturers, marketers, and retailers to better understand consumer behavior and develop targeted strategies to improve customer retention and market share in Dharmapuri District.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the most preferred home appliance brands in Dharmapuri
- To understand the factors influencing brand preference
- To analyze the level of customer loyalty towards these brands
- To examine the relationship between brand preference and customer loyalty.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- In the fast-growing Indian consumer market, home appliances have become a vital part of household functioning and lifestyle improvement. With numerous brands offering a variety of products at different price points, consumers often face challenges in selecting a brand that aligns with their expectations in terms of quality, price, service, and overall value.
- Dharmapuri District, which comprises a mix of urban and rural consumers, is witnessing an increasing demand for home appliances due to rising income levels and changing lifestyles. However, it is unclear which factors most influence consumer brand preference in this region and whether these preferences translate into long-term brand loyalty.
- Manufacturers and retailers need a deeper understanding of local consumer behavior to remain competitive and responsive to the market. Despite the importance of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in sustaining market presence, there is limited research specific to Dharmapuri District that investigates these aspects.
- This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the brand preferences of consumers and examining the factors that contribute to their loyalty towards home appliance brands. The research aims to provide insights

that will help businesses design more effective marketing strategies and improve customer retention in the Dharmapuri home appliance market.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic plan for conducting the research study. This section outlines the research design, sampling methods, data collection techniques, and tools used for analysis in the present study.

5.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study follows a descriptive research design, as it aims to describe the brand preferences and customer loyalty patterns among home appliance users in Dharmapuri District.

5.2. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study is conducted in Dharmapuri District, covering urban and semi-urban areas where there is considerable demand for home appliances.

5.3. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A convenience sampling method is adopted to select respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey.

5.4. SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size for the study is 250 respondents, comprising consumers who use home appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, and other kitchen and household devices.

5.5. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire distributed directly to consumers. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions.
- Secondary Data: Gathered from books, journals, research articles, company reports, and online sources to support the theoretical framework and background of the study.

5.6. TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data is analyzed using the following statistical tools:

- Percentage Analysis – to understand the distribution of responses.
- Chi-square Test – to identify the relationship between demographic factors and brand preference.
- Correlation Analysis – to examine the link between brand preference and customer loyalty.
- Graphical Representation – to visually present key findings for better interpretation.

5.7. RESEARCH GAP

Although several studies have examined brand preference and customer loyalty in metro and tier-1 cities, there is limited research focusing on semi-urban and rural districts like Dharmapuri. Consumer behavior in such regions may differ due to factors like limited brand exposure, income constraints, and availability of service centers. This study aims to address this gap by exploring brand preference and loyalty patterns specific to home appliance users in Dharmapuri District.

5.8. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1) H_{01} (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant relationship between brand preference and customer loyalty towards home appliances in Dharmapuri District.

H_{11} (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant relationship between brand preference and customer loyalty towards home appliances in Dharmapuri District.

2) H_{02} :

There is no significant difference in brand preference based on demographic factors (such as age, income, and education level) of the respondents.

H_{12} :

There is a significant difference in brand preference based on demographic factors (such as age, income, and education level) of the respondents.

3) H_{03} :

After-sales service does not significantly influence customer loyalty towards home appliance brands.

H_{13} :

After-sales service significantly influences customer loyalty towards home appliance brands.

H_{04} :

Product quality has no significant impact on brand preference.

4) H_{14} :

Product quality has a significant impact on brand preference.

6. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

6.1. BRAND PREFERENCE

Kumar & Rani (2020) conducted a study on brand preference in the Indian home appliances sector and found that consumers primarily value quality, durability, and technology while selecting brands. Their research highlighted that younger consumers are more brand-conscious, and brand preference is often influenced by online reviews and social media exposure.

Yadav & Singh (2019) examined how advertising and promotional strategies influence brand preference among home appliance users. They found that celebrity endorsements and brand reputation significantly improve the likelihood of brand preference, especially in urban and semi-urban regions.

Bhattacharya (2021) explored consumer perceptions toward local versus global brands in the home appliance segment. The study revealed that while international brands are preferred for their innovation and reliability, Indian consumers also show growing trust in domestic brands due to improved quality and affordability.

6.2. CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Mishra & Das (2022) studied the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the consumer durable market. Their results confirmed that after-sales service, consistent product performance, and trust are the key drivers of loyalty, particularly in the case of high-involvement products like home appliances.

Patel & Joshi (2018) emphasized the importance of emotional connection in customer loyalty. According to their study, consumers who feel emotionally connected to a brand are more likely to repurchase and recommend it, regardless of the price or availability of alternatives.

Sarkar (2020) identified that loyalty programs and personalized customer experiences have a strong positive effect on customer retention in the Indian home appliance industry. The study suggests brands should invest in CRM tools to build stronger customer relationships.

6.3. INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Ramesh & Kumari (2021) analyzed the impact of demographic variables on brand preference and loyalty. Their findings indicated that age, income, and education significantly influence consumer decisions. Higher-income groups tend to be loyal to premium brands, while middle-income consumers prioritize value for money.

Nandhini & Raj (2023) conducted a study on rural and semi-urban customers in Tamil Nadu and found that awareness and accessibility strongly affect brand choice. The study emphasized the need for targeted marketing strategies in smaller districts like Dharmapuri to attract and retain customers.

6.4. TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE INFLUENCE

Sharma & Verma (2022) explored the role of e-commerce and online reviews in shaping brand preference for home appliances. Their study found that consumers increasingly rely on user-generated content, reviews, and comparison platforms before making a purchase decision.

Kaur & Bhatia (2020) noted that digital platforms, influencer marketing, and mobile apps are transforming customer-brand interactions. The availability of brand service apps has also improved consumer trust and loyalty through better post-purchase engagement.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected from 250 respondents in Dharmapuri District. The data was processed using appropriate statistical tools including percentage analysis, Chi-square test, and correlation analysis to draw meaningful insights related to brand preference and customer loyalty.

Table 6.1

Demographic Variable	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	130	52%
	Female	120	48%
Age Group	18-25	70	28%
	26-40	100	40%
	41-60	60	24%
	Above 60	20	8%
	Below SSLC	40	16%
Educational Qualification	HSC	80	32%
	UG	90	36%
	PG and above	40	16%
Monthly Income	Below ₹10,000	60	24%
	₹10,001-₹20,000	90	36%
	₹20,001-₹30,000	60	24%
	Above ₹30,000	40	16%

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents are aged between 26-40 and have completed undergraduate education. Most belong to a monthly income bracket of ₹10,001-₹20,000.

Table 6.2

Preferred Home Appliance Brands

Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
LG	70	28%
Samsung	60	24%
Whirlpool	40	16%

IFB	30	12%
Panasonic	25	10%
Others	25	10%

Interpretation:

LG is the most preferred brand, followed by Samsung and Whirlpool. Brand preference is largely driven by product quality and brand reputation.

Table 6. 3

Factor	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Product Quality	90	36%
Price	60	24%
After-sales Service	40	16%
Brand Image	30	12%
Features & Technology	30	12%

Interpretation:

Product quality is the most important factor for consumers while selecting home appliance brands, followed by price and after-sales service.

Table 6. 4

Customer Loyalty Indicators

Loyalty Measure	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Repeated Purchase	130	52%
Brand Recommendation	110	44%
No Preference (Switchers)	10	4%

Interpretation:

More than half of the respondents exhibit brand loyalty by repurchasing the same brand. 44% are likely to recommend the brand, showing high customer satisfaction.

8. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Chi-square Test – Association between Income and Brand Preference

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant association between monthly income and brand preference.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant association between monthly income and brand preference.
- **Chi-square value calculated:** 18.32
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 12
- **Significance Level (p-value):** 0.05
- **Table value:** 21.03

Result: Since the calculated value (18.32) < table value (21.03), we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Interpretation: There is no significant association between monthly income and brand preference.

Table -6. 5

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Product Quality & Loyalty	0.74

Interpretation:

There is a strong positive correlation between product quality and customer loyalty, indicating that as product quality increases, loyalty also increases.

9. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected from 250 respondents and the subsequent analysis, the following major findings have been observed:

1) Demographics:

- Majority of respondents are in the age group of 26–40 years.
- Most respondents are graduates and fall within the income range of ₹10,001–₹20,000.

2) Brand Preference:

- LG is the most preferred home appliance brand, followed by Samsung and Whirlpool.
- Product quality, price, and after-sales service are the top three factors influencing brand preference.
- Peer influence and advertising also play a significant role in brand choice.

3) Customer Loyalty:

- 52% of respondents have repurchased appliances from the same brand, showing a fair degree of loyalty.
- 44% of the respondents recommend their preferred brand to others.
- Product quality shows a strong positive correlation with customer loyalty ($r = 0.74$).
- After-sales service significantly contributes to continued brand engagement.

4) Statistical Findings:

- No significant association was found between monthly income and brand preference.
- Demographic factors like age and education slightly influence brand choices.

10. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered to brands, retailers, and marketers:

1) Focus on Product Quality:

As quality is the most important factor for brand preference and loyalty, manufacturers must maintain consistent product standards.

2) Strengthen After-sales Service:

Efficient and accessible after-sales support builds long-term trust and enhances customer retention.

3) Tailored Marketing in Semi-urban Areas:

Local campaigns, regional advertisements, and promotional offers tailored to the Dharmapuri market can improve brand reach.

4) Enhance Online Presence:

With growing digital awareness, brands should improve online visibility and offer seamless e-commerce and service experiences.

5) Build Emotional Brand Connection:

Loyalty can be increased by engaging consumers emotionally through customer relationship management (CRM), loyalty rewards, and personalized communication.

6) Increase Service Center Access:

Setting up more local service centers in rural and semi-urban areas will boost consumer confidence in long-term brand usage.

11. CONCLUSION

The study has provided a comprehensive view of the brand preference and customer loyalty landscape in the home appliance market of Dharmapuri District. Consumers in this region are becoming more brand-aware, price-conscious,

and quality-driven. Product quality, after-sales service, and value for money are the key determinants of brand preference. A notable portion of the population exhibits brand loyalty, especially when brands deliver consistent performance and customer support.

Manufacturers and retailers who aim to thrive in such semi-urban markets must focus on delivering high-quality products with dependable service while also understanding regional needs and preferences. The study concludes that fostering customer satisfaction through value, service, and trust can significantly strengthen brand loyalty and market share in Dharmapuri and similar regions.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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