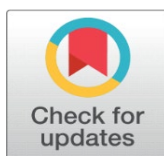


A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY BETWEEN AIRTEL AND JIO CONSUMERS

Dr. S. Kalpana Devi ¹

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Commerce Mata Sundri College for Women University of Delhi New Delhi 110002, India



DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6007](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6007)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2024 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.

ABSTRACT

Customer loyalty is a critical driver of success in the highly competitive telecommunications industry, where brands continuously vie for consumer attention and retention. This study explores and compares the loyalty of customers towards two major Indian telecom providers, Airtel and Jio. Despite both companies holding a substantial market share, they adopt distinct business models, marketing strategies, and customer service approaches that shape consumer loyalty in different ways. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, and a review of existing market data, this study investigates key factors influencing customer loyalty—such as network quality, pricing structures, brand image, customer support, and service innovation. The comparative analysis highlights that customer loyalty is not solely influenced by pricing or service availability but is deeply intertwined with emotional connections, trust, and perceived value. The study concludes that both Airtel and Jio have built strong customer bases, but their loyalty drivers differ significantly, and understanding these nuances can help both companies refine their strategies to enhance consumer retention.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Telecommunications, Service Quality, Brand Image, Consumer Retention, Etc



1. INTRODUCTION

In the fast-evolving telecommunications industry in India, customer loyalty plays a pivotal role in determining the sustainability and growth of service providers. Among the leading telecom giants in the country, Airtel and Jio have emerged as two of the most dominant players, each boasting millions of subscribers. However, despite their prominence, the loyalty levels of their customers differ, influenced by a variety of factors ranging from network quality and pricing strategies to customer service and brand perception.

This comparative study aims to delve into the dynamics of customer loyalty among Airtel and Jio consumers. The core objective is to assess the factors that shape consumer loyalty, such as service quality, pricing models, customer experience, and brand identity, and to compare how these factors contribute to the sustained patronage of these two brands. While Jio revolutionized the Indian telecom market with its competitive pricing strategies and extensive 4G network, Airtel has long been recognized for its reliable service quality, premium offerings, and customer-centric approach. By analyzing the contrasting yet interconnected approaches of these two telecom giants, this study seeks to understand how consumer perceptions of value, service reliability, and brand trust translate into customer loyalty.

Through this comparative analysis, the study will provide valuable insights for telecom companies striving to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, and for consumers seeking to make informed choices about their telecom provider.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dimpy Sachar (2019), in her study focuses on identifying the different factors influencing the satisfaction level of customers towards Airtel and Jio. The major finding of the study is that there is no significant difference in the factors affecting the satisfaction level of Airtel and Reliance Jio. From this study it can also be observed that there are some variables where customers are more satisfied with Jio than compared to Airtel. Results of the study shows that Jio is a more economical choice, customer are satisfied with the schemes and offered by Jio, customers are also satisfied with the local call cost per minute offered by the company, on the contrary there are some variables like better network coverage where Airtel enjoys higher level of customer satisfaction than Jio.

Vadivel and Prawinsankar (2023) Customer satisfaction is the level of satisfaction offered by a company's products or services as indicated by the proportion of loyal consumers. The study's primary goal is to contrast the services provided by Jio versus Airtel. The study has been carried out by the descriptive type of research. The respondents who are based in Coimbatore City and utilize both Airtel and Jio services are included in the population. The study's key findings include that customer satisfaction levels towards the service, coverage, network speed, data plan and additional benefits. The study also focuses to determine the level of awareness and knowledge of 5G technology.

Guna Sundari and Charles Solomon (2025) in their study analyses the services of Jio and Airtel, two leading telecom providers in India. The research evaluates key aspects such as network coverage, internet speed, pricing, customer satisfaction, and value-added services. While Jio is known for its affordable data plans and extensive 4G coverage, Airtel offers superior network reliability and customer service. Speed tests indicate that Airtel provides faster internet in urban areas, whereas Jio performs well in rural regions. The study highlights the strengths and weaknesses of both providers, helping consumers make informed choices based on their needs for connectivity, cost effectiveness and service quality

2.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in the study area.
- To analyze the key factors influencing customer loyalty towards Airtel and Jio
- To compare the loyalty levels of consumers who prefer Airtel with those who prefer Jio in the study area

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study follows a descriptive and comparative research design, aimed at identifying, analyzing, and comparing the key factors that influence customer loyalty for Airtel and Jio users. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect first-hand information from Airtel and Jio users. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who are current users of either Airtel or Jio. A sample size of 100 respondents comprising of 50 respondents using Jio and 50 respondents using Airtel was targeted to ensure a balanced comparison. The secondary data has been collected from various books, journals and websites.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from 100 respondents—50 Airtel users and 50 Jio users—followed by interpretation of the findings. The analysis focuses on key factors that influence customer loyalty, such as service quality, pricing, network reliability, customer service, brand image, and overall satisfaction. The following table shows the analysis of data,

Table 1

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	60	60
	Female	40	42
Age Group	Less than 25 years	32	32
	25–35 years	46	46

Occupation	36–45 years	12	12
	46 years and above	10	10
	Students	28	28
	Private Employees	34	34
	Government Employees	15	15
	Business Owners	12	12
	Others (freelancers, homemakers, etc.)	11	11
Monthly Income	Below ₹10,000	17	17
	₹10,001 – ₹25,000	33	33
	₹25,001 – ₹50,000	32	32
	Above ₹50,000	18	18
Area of residence	Urban	58	58
	Semi-Urban/Rural	42	42
Network Used	Airtel	50	50
	Jio	50	50

Source Primary data

The majority of respondents were male (60%), while females made up 40% of the sample. This suggests a slightly higher male participation in the survey. Most respondents were in the younger age brackets, with 46% between 25 and 35 years and 32% under 25 years. The remaining 22% were aged 36 years and above, indicating a predominantly young adult population. The respondents came from varied occupational backgrounds. Private employees formed the largest group at 34%, followed by students at 28%. Government employees accounted for 15%, business owners 12%, and others such as freelancers and homemakers made up 11%. This spread shows a good mix of working professionals, students, and others. Income levels were fairly distributed. One-third (33%) earned between ₹10,001 and ₹25,000, and 32% earned ₹25,001 to ₹50,000, suggesting a majority belong to middle-income groups. Lower-income respondents (below ₹10,000) were 17%, and those earning above ₹50,000 were 18%, indicating some diversity in economic status. A majority (58%) lived in urban areas, while 42% were from semi-urban or rural locations, reflecting a reasonable urban-rural mix in the sample. The sample was evenly split between Airtel and Jio users, with 50 respondents each, enabling a balanced comparison between the two networks.

Table 2

Factors Influencing Customer loyalty

Factor	Airtel	Percentage (%)	Jio	Percentage (%)
	No. of Respondents		No. of Respondents	
Network Quality	18	36%	6	12%
Data Speed	10	20%	12	24%
Customer Service	9	18%	8	16%
Brand Trust	8	16%	4	8%
Pricing	5	10%	20	40%
Total	50	100%	50	100%

Source Primary data

The above table shows that Airtel is perceived to have significantly better network quality, with 36% of respondents favouring it compared to only 12% for Jio. This indicates Airtel's strong position in network reliability and coverage among users. Jio slightly outperforms Airtel in terms of data speed preference, with 24% of respondents choosing Jio against 20% for Airtel. This suggests that Jio's network may offer faster data services, a crucial factor for many users. Both companies have fairly close ratings in customer service, with Airtel at 18% and Jio at 16%. This indicates a relatively comparable experience for customers on this front. Airtel leads with 16% of respondents citing brand trust compared to 8% for Jio. This implies that Airtel enjoys higher confidence and loyalty from its user base. Pricing is the factor where Jio dominates, with 40% of respondents favouring it versus only 10% for Airtel. This highlights Jio's competitive pricing strategy as a major attraction for consumers.

Relationship between Customer loyalty levels of those who prefer Airtel with those who prefer Jio and their Demographic Profile – Chi Square Test

In order to examine the satisfaction level of the customers, the researcher has identified 5 variables namely, Network Coverage and Reliability, Affordable and Transparent Pricing, Quality of Customer Service, Ease of Use and Convenience and Trust and Security. The following null hypothesis has been framed to test the relationship between the Customer loyalty levels of those who prefer Airtel with those who prefer Jio and their Demographic Profile,

H0: There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their loyalty towards Airtel and Jio networks.

Table 3

Relationship between Customer Loyalty Towards Airtel and Jio and their Demographic Profile – Chi Square Test

Customer Satisfaction	Network	Value	Gender	Age	Occupation	Monthly Income
Network Coverage and Reliability	Airtel	χ^2 value p- value	11.275 (0.011)	8.124 (0.036)	6.149 (0.041)	2.111 (0.008)
	Jio	χ^2 value p- value	6.217 (0.041)	11.842 (0.040)	6.632 (0.000)	3.145 (0.001)
Affordable and Transparent Pricing	Airtel	χ^2 value p- value	1.279 (0.631)	5.434 (0.006)	3.217 (0.031)	7.106 (0.000)
	Jio	χ^2 value p- value	7.204 (0.120)	2.143 (0.003)	1.358 (0.000)	2.772 (0.004)
Quality of Customer Service	Airtel	χ^2 value p- value	3.166 (0.000)	1.826 (0.002)	9.815 (0.000)	3.990 (0.030)
	Jio	χ^2 value p- value	6.350 (0.001)	8.714 (0.000)	16.210 (0.525)	3.718 (0.002)
Ease of Use and Convenience	Airtel	χ^2 value p- value	8.713 (0.000)	8.222 (0.033)	6.154 (0.002)	4.301 (0.001)
	Jio	χ^2 value p- value	14.350 (0.000)	2.954 (0.000)	11.092 (0.000)	7.151 (0.000)
Trust and Security	Airtel	χ^2 value p- value	4.864 (0.003)	7.647 (0.630)	9.559 (0.004)	12.642 (0.000)
	Jio	χ^2 value p- value	4.923 (0.000)	10.316 (0.003)	12.043 (0.010)	6.662 (0.000)

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows the relationship between the loyalty of customers towards mobile network services (Airtel and Jio) and their demographic profile such as gender, age, occupation, and monthly income.

It is evident from the table that in most cases, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there exists a significant relationship between customer loyalty across different service factors (such as network coverage, pricing, customer service, ease of use, and trust) and their demographic characteristics.

This implies that demographic variables significantly influence customer perceptions and satisfaction levels towards both Airtel and Jio mobile networks. Hence, mobile service providers must take into account the diverse needs and expectations of different customer groups when designing their services and customer engagement strategies.

5. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this comparative study between Airtel and Jio consumers, the following suggestions are proposed to help both telecom providers enhance customer loyalty, improve retention, and refine their strategies:

- 1) While Airtel excels in customer service, both brands can improve by offering more personalized and proactive support. Utilizing customer data to tailor interactions, offer customized plans, and resolve issues before they escalate could help build stronger emotional connections and increase loyalty.
- 2) Although Jio has a widespread 4G network, customers still prioritize network reliability. The service providers should continue investing in improving network consistency, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- 3) The service providers should consider introducing flexible pricing models that cater to different customer segments, ensuring competitive offerings while maintaining perceived value. Discounted loyalty plans, bundling services, or loyalty rewards for long-term subscribers can help enhance retention.
- 4) The companies should work on building stronger emotional connections by enhancing brand messaging, focusing on social responsibility, and incorporating community-driven initiatives.
- 5) Offering value-added services such as exclusive content, digital entertainment, or smart home integrations could appeal to a wider audience.
- 6) A critical takeaway from this study is the importance of actively listening to customer feedback. Both brands should implement more robust mechanisms for customer feedback collection and ensure that insights are used to drive continuous improvement.
- 7) Airtel and Jio should conduct regular market research and benchmark themselves against both domestic and international competitors. This would allow them to anticipate market shifts and stay ahead of the curve in terms of both technology and customer satisfaction.
- 8) Both companies should prioritize transparent communication, especially in areas like pricing changes, service interruptions, and new policy announcements.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence customer loyalty in the Indian telecom sector, specifically comparing Airtel and Jio. Both brands, while dominant in their own rights, appeal to customers in distinct ways, driven by different core strategies. Jio's aggressive pricing model and widespread 4G network have undeniably captured a large consumer base, fostering loyalty among price-sensitive users. On the other hand, Airtel continues to attract and retain loyal customers primarily through its superior service quality, consistent network reliability, and premium customer experience, appealing to those who value long-term stability and customer-centric support. The findings from the study suggest that while pricing and network coverage are critical factors in shaping loyalty, the emotional connection and perceived value play a more significant role in sustaining long-term loyalty. Consumers tend to remain loyal to brands that not only meet their immediate needs but also align with their values, trust, and overall experience. As a result, both Airtel and Jio must continuously innovate and adapt their strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and retention.

The study concludes that no single factor can guarantee customer loyalty in the telecom industry; it is the synergy of multiple factors, including service quality, customer support, network experience, and brand perception, that ultimately determines consumer allegiance. For telecom companies, understanding these intricate dynamics and tailoring offerings to meet the diverse needs of their customers is key to maintaining competitive advantage and fostering lasting brand loyalty.

This comparative analysis contributes to a broader understanding of consumer behaviour in the rapidly evolving telecom landscape, offering practical insights for marketers, business leaders, and telecom providers to refine their customer retention strategies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Vadivel, M and Prawinsankar, SR (2023), 'A Comparative Study of Customer Satisfaction towards Airtel and Jio', Recent Perspectives in Marketing, ISBN: 978-93-94428-70-6, pp. 53-62.
- Guna Sundari, R and Charles Solomon, R (2025), 'A Comparative Study on Jio and Airtel Services', International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, Vol. 6 (4), pp. 10280-10284.
- Dimpy Sachar (2019), 'An Empirical Study on Customer Satisfaction Related to Telecommunication Services- (A Comparative Analysis of Airtel & Jio Services)', International Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Management and Legal Practices, Vol. 9 (3), pp. 9-23.