



AN OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND PREFERENCES TOWARDS WASHING MACHINE IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT”

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ABSTRACT

Consumer buying behaviour is very important to the present market environment because it enables them to understand and forecast consumer buying behaviour. This study aims at analyzing consumer buying behaviour and preference towards washing machine. The scope of the study has been limited to certain purchasing behavioral aspects of consumers towards washing machine such as lifestyle perception, brand preference, promotional offers, brand influence to buy the product, factors which are affecting consumer preference. Therefore this study broadly aims to analyze customers buying behaviour and preferences towards washing machine with reference to Tiruchirappalli District. The main objective of this paper is to analyses the socio demographic profile of the respondents, to find out consumer preference of washing machine in Tiruchirappalli district and to know the factors influencing consumer preference in washing machines. Hypotheses have been framed and it has been tested with the help of relevant statistical tools and findings have been arrived at. Suitable suggestions have been given to improve the consumer buying behaviour and preference of washing machine.

Introduction

Durable goods industry in India is one of the fast growing and competitive industries of the country. The enlargement of these industries is really attributed to the most distinct feature of Indian economy-population explosion. The ultimate users of the home appliances are housewives and housemaids, the purchase decisions and brand preferences are enacted by husbands and wives together. Unlike in the past, the consumers are more educated and more enlightened today. The market trends reveal that the consumers are well informed and therefore they demand greater assured

performance from products and companies. This has led to a change in the marketing approach of the growth conscious companies. A shift has taken place from the seller's market to the buyer's market. Due to the growing competition in the industry the companies are under the pressure to win customers and this has empowered the consumers more. The emphasis traditionally was on making sales rather than building relationships; on selling and reselling rather than caring for the customers. But now every company of the home appliances industry wisely concentrates enough to regularly measure and systematically maintain the customer satisfied, because the key to customer retention is customer satisfaction. Consumer home appliances consist of televisions, refrigerators, air conditioners and washing machines. Consumer home appliance products are often expensive for an average home, and are usually expected to last two to three years. These goods are often purchased as gifts on a seasonal basis or for special occasions. This category includes but is not limited to recreational goods, sporting equipment, toys and hobby goods, jewellery, watches, home-ware and other durable home goods with long product life¹. White goods such as washing machines, refrigerators and coffee machines, as well as brown goods such as DVD players, televisions and stereos are often grouped in this category. Consumer home appliances include any type of products purchased by consumers that are manufactured for long-term use. Another common example of consumer durables in the possession of most homes is appliances. These items may include ovens, refrigerators, toasters, and gas or electric water heaters. Consumer durables of this type are intended for use on a regular basis, and often are sold with some type of warranty or service contract that helps to ensure the appliance will work for an appreciable period.

Indian consumer durables market used to be dominated by a few domestic players like Godrej, Allwyn, Kelvinator and Voltas. But post-liberalization many foreign companies have entered into India, dethroning the Indian players and dominating the market. The major categories in the market are CTVs, Refrigerators, Air-Conditioners and Washing Machines. India being the second fastest growing economy with a huge consumer class has resulted in consumer durables as one of the fastest growing industries in India². LG and Samsung, the two Korean companies have been maintaining the lead in the industry with LG being the leader in almost all the categories.

The objectives of this study are the following:

- To analyses the socio demographic profile of the respondents
- To find out consumer preference of washing machine in Tiruchirappalli district
- To know the factors influencing consumer preference in washing machines
- To study the relationship between consumer satisfaction and post sales services
- To give suitable suggestions to improve consumer preference of washing machine

Hypothesis of the study

- There is a significant difference between taluk wise respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant difference between taluk wise respondents and their Overall brand influence of washing machine
- There is a significant association between age of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant difference between gender of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between gender of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine
- There is a significant difference between educational qualification of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant difference between occupational status of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between occupational status of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant difference between domicile of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between family size of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine
- There is a significant difference between monthly income of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between monthly income of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant difference between factor influence to buy the product of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between source of knowledge about different brands of washing machines of the respondents and their overall promotional offers

- There is a significant difference between preference towards specific brand of washing machine of the respondents and their overall promotional offers
- There is a significant difference between power of decision making involved by the family members of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant association between opinion of celebrity endorsement in case of Washing Machine of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant association between opinion about 'After Sales Service' of Washing Machine of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant association between preferred mode of payment of the respondents and their overall consumer preference
- There is a significant association between brand influence of washing machine and overall consumer preference
- There is a significant association between overall promotional offers and overall consumer preference

Research methodology

The Tiruchirappalli district has 11 Taluks. Each Taluk consists of 75 targeted respondents chosen based on simple random sampling. The present study is confined to the sample size of 825 who buy washing machine in Tiruchirappalli District. Primary data has been used for the present study. Primary data has been collected from the respondents with the help of the questionnaire and has been analysed with the help of statistical tools such as, Percentage analysis, Mean score was calculated to find the average responses from the respondents. Besides minimum and maximum mean were also worked out to enlist the minimum and maximum responses. Standard deviations were also calculated to find the level of deviations among the respondents. Chi-square test applied to find the significant association between variables. One-way ANOVA analysis of variance (*f* test) was used to find out the significant difference if any between variables. Student 't' test was used to find the significance difference between variables and Mann-Whitney test for differentiate rank analysis between the variables.

FINDINGS

The following are the findings based on the analysis of the primary data.

Findings related to socio demographic profile of the respondents

- One third (32.6 per cent) of the respondents between the age group of 31 to 40yrs, 25.9 per cent of the respondents were below 30yrs, 21.8 per cent of the respondents were 51yrs and above and the remaining 19.6 per cent of the respondents were 41 to 50yrs.

- Majority (62.3 per cent) of the respondents were female and the remaining 37.7 per cent of the respondents were male.
- Vast majority (65.7 per cent) of the respondents were married and the remaining 34.3 per cent of the respondents were unmarried.
- Majority (65.5 per cent) of the respondents were from urban area and 34.5 per cent of the respondents were from rural area.
- More than half 54.4 per cent of the respondents were from medium size families, 25.1 per cent of the respondents were from small size family and the remaining 20.5 per cent of the respondents were large family.
- One third (35.2 per cent) of the respondents were influenced by Television, 24.6 per cent of the respondents were influenced by newspaper, 15.6 per cent of the respondents were influenced by internet, 10.5 per cent of the respondents were influenced by radio, 7.8 per cent of the respondents were magazines, 6.3 per cent of the respondents were influenced by Billboards.
- More than one fourth (26.3 per cent) of the respondents were strongly agreed that they are influenced by celebrity endorsement, 21.9 per cent of the respondents were having neutral opinion, 21.5 per cent of the respondents agreed, 18.5 per cent of the respondents disagreed and 11.8 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed.
- More than one fourth (29.5 per cent) of the respondents strongly agreed about after sale service, 26.2 per cent of the respondents agreed, 18.2 per cent of the respondent were having neutral opinion, 13.9 per cent of the respondent disagreed and 12.2 per cent of the respondent strongly disagreed.
- Nearly one third (27.9 per cent) of the respondents prefer credit card to buy washing machine, 22.5 per cent of the respondents by hire purchase, 19.3 per cent of the respondents by installment credit, 16.1 per cent of the respondents by full credit and remaining 14.2 percent of the respondents prefer to buy washing machine by cash.

Findings related to consumer preference towards price of washing machine

- One third (31.4per cent) of the respondents were strongly agreed that they buy as much as possible at sale prices
- One third (30.4per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that they usually choices products with low price, 28.1per cent of the respondent were agreed,
- More then one fourth (29.2per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed
- that they look carefully to find the best value for their money,
- One third (30.8per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that if product has high price means the quality of the product also better,

- One third (32per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that their washing machine is genuinely priced,

Findings related to consumer preference towards brand loyalty of washing machine

- One third (30.8per cent) of the respondents were strongly agreed that they choose well-known national brands,
- More then one fourth (29.5per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that the more expensive brands are usually their choices,
- One third (32.1per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that specialty stores offer the best products for them,
- More then one fourth (29.8per cent) of the respondent were agreed that they prefer to buy the best selling brands,
- One fourth (24.6per cent) of the respondent were strongly agreed that they buy favorite brands again and again,

Hypothesis related findings

- There is no significant difference between taluk wise respondents and their overall consumer preference. The mean and S.D value were been high in Manapparai taluk wise 28.49 ± 4.858 . Hence the calculated value is greater than table value $P > 0.05$. So research hypothesis is rejected.
- There is a significant difference between taluk wise respondents and their Overall brand influence of washing machine. The mean and S.D value were been high in Manachanallur taluk wise 32.36 ± 3.604 . Hence the calculated value is less than table value $P < 0.05$. So research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is no significant difference between all taluk of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. The overall consumer perception of mean and S.D value were been high in Tiruchirappalli-West taluk wise 115 ± 11.577 . Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value ($P > 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis accepted.
- There is a significant association between age of the respondents overall promotional offers. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant association between age of the respondents Overall brand influence of washing machine. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant association between age of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted.

- There is a significant difference between gender of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. The overall promotional offers of the males' mean and S.D value was 28.13 ± 4.236 and for females 27.51 ± 4.075 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is a significant difference between gender of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine. The overall brand influence of washing machine of the males' mean and S.D value was 29.73 ± 3.608 and for females 31.89 ± 4.064 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. The overall consumer preference of the males' mean and S.D value was 114.58 ± 9.369 and for females 113.45 ± 11.513 . Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value ($P > 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is rejected.
- There is a significant difference between educational qualification of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. The overall promotional offers was being high among people who have completed PG degree and their mean and S.D value was 28.61 ± 3.723 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is a significant difference between educational qualification of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine. The overall brand influence of washing machine was being high among people who have completed PG degree and their mean and S.D value was 33.30 ± 3.624 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is no significant difference between educational qualification of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. The overall consumer preference was being high among people who have completed UG degree and their mean and S.D value was 115.46 ± 11.081 . Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value ($P > 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis accepted.
- There is a significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. The overall promotional offers were being high among married people and their mean and S.D value was 27.96 ± 4.162 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine. The overall brand influence of washing machine were being high among married people and their mean and S.D value was 31.66 ± 3.918 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis rejected.

- There is no significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. The overall consumer preference were being high among unmarried people and their mean and S.D value was 114.06 ± 9.578 . Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value ($P > 0.05$). So the research hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis accepted.
- There is a significant difference between occupational status of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. The overall promotional offers were being high among business people and their mean and S.D value was 29.18 ± 4.158 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted is and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant difference between occupational status of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine. The overall brand influence of washing machine were being high among people working in government and their mean and S.D value was 32.08 ± 4.253 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted is and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant difference between occupational status of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. The overall consumer preference were being high among people working in private and their mean and S.D value was 115.72 ± 10.759 . Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted is and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is a significant difference between domicile of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted is and null hypothesis rejected.
- There is no significant difference between domicile of the respondents and their overall brand influence of washing machine. Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value ($P > 0.05$). So the research hypothesis rejected and null hypothesis accepted.
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- There is a significant difference between monthly income of the respondents and their overall promotional offers. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted and null hypothesis rejected.
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- There is a significant difference between preference towards specific brand of washing machine of the respondents and their overall consumer preference. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted and null hypothesis rejected.
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- There is a significant association between overall promotional offers and overall consumer preference. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted and null hypothesis rejected
- There is a significant association between brand influence of washing machine and overall consumer preference. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($P < 0.05$). So the research hypothesis accepted and null hypothesis rejected

SUGGESTIONS

- It is suggested that consumer preference which is characterized as more significant in its nature at market environment, has been subject to research often. With the regard the companies should take initiate and promote a regular monitoring and of consumers preference towards their products features and brand range.
- Purchase decision process which is one of the factors influenced in consumer buying preference on particular brand. Basically family members influence in the purchase decision process is to be considered more significant than the influence of any other factor, for the most important reason, the power of decision process in family that decides the level of consumption pattern, choice of products, brands, color and etc., related aspects of product. In order to reach the prospective buyer without any complications, is to recognize the person dominating the decision making process he / she is to be influenced in the desired action.
- The marketers of particular washing machine should insist all the technical information on the use of products with any technical fault and avoid frequent repairs, free servicing of machines to during the guarantee period insisted upon the consumers.
- And it is suggested to the consumers that should prefer well known Indian brands to imported ones so that after sales service can be availed. Not only for better quality but the service after the sales can be developed.

- The regular communication and broadcast of product to the customers by using advance media techniques is predictable. Today, the technology revolution of the market environment allows much greater customization of particular brand of washing machine and its service, promotional offers than older process. Technologies also facilitate marketers to collect and analyze increasingly complex data on consumer's preference and buying patterns and personal characteristics. And also it allows significantly insightful models and use technology to create flexible supply chain, innovative products and communication ideas and satisfy even more consumer requirements.
- It is also suggested by the researcher that awareness being the first element of purchase process, the manufacturers need to focus on the customer awareness in a better way for achieving the results. Therefore brand image is caused by the brand awareness and so brand awareness should be created to pull the customers towards purchasing of particular product.
- Consumer preference research is an effective tool in marketing for all types of organization. It provides clues as how to reach and serve the consumers more effectively. In order to achieve success in the market, the companies may adopt this methodology.

CONCLUSION

Now days, the consumers in towns of Tiruchirappalli district are increasingly buying more and using different brands of washing machine. So, an understanding of the consumer preference enables the marketers to take marketing decision which are compatible with consumer needs.

There are some major classes of consumer preference determinants and expectations, namely, price of the product, brand loyalty, after sales service, durability, appearance, promotional offers, technology, and dealer relationship. The demographic factors age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, occupation, residential area, size of family and monthly income etc., with the consumer about washing machine in the towns of Tiruchirappalli district are different. So the dealers/vendors should consider the demographic factors of consumers while marketing their products.

From the conversation made in the previous chapters, there are certain factors which are identified in the study as influencing purchase decision and satisfied the consumers. The manufacturers of washing machine should concentrate on these features as they may be the choice of a few more prospective buyers. With growing technological improvements in the world, the manufacturers should introduce new technological goods in production of washing machine. So, the manufacturers and dealers should study the preference of consumers and cater to their needs to be successful.

The study on consumer behaviour topic has occupied an important role in the modern marketing field. Besides “An analytical enquiry into consumer preference of washing machine in Tiruchirappalli district” may also be studied in the future.

