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# A Study on Customer Satisfaction of Consumer Durable Goods with Special Reference to Washing Machines in Madurai City



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### ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, there has been a significant transformation in the Indian consumer durables market. Consumer durables are considered luxury products but have now become a need for middle-class households in India. Purchase needs to provide trust, happiness, and overall satisfaction with the product. The fundamental characteristics of consumer durables are their high unit cost, prolonged lifetime, and, subsequently, less frequency of purchases. User's interactions with their family, neighbours, friends, and relatives significantly impact their purchase decisions. The market for consumer durable goods is extremely competitive and complicated and is undergoing rapid change. The demand for high-end goods like washing machines, televisions, refrigerators, and air conditioners has grown significantly along with increases in expendable income. There has been a significant change in consumer attitudes and buying habits worldwide in recent years, particularly in the Indian white goods sector. In this study, consumers' purchasing behaviours toward particular white products, such as washing machines, were analysed. The purpose of this study is to determine the variables influencing consumer decisions to buy washing machines. The data for the study was collected through a questionnaire from 50 respondents in Madurai city, and the analysis was made using a simple percentage.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction defines the value or ratings provided by the customers against the company's goods and services based on the fulfilling of customer's expectations. It can be expressed as total customers overall experiences with a business, its products, or its services reach levels of satisfaction.

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Product and service quality are intimately related to customer satisfaction and business success. Urban and rural households with comparable incomes have drastically different consumer behaviours. Indian middle-class growth is the major draw for multinational corporations ([Thakur and Hundal, 2008](#)). The market has been evolving and offering exceptional commercial opportunities for a very long time. Consumer preferences influence changes in the operations of manufacturing companies. The views of consumers toward durable items have recently changed. There are numerous causes for it. The purpose of this study is to investigate trends in customer preferences for durable products. The economy can be categorized into three categories—agriculture, manufacturing, and services—. In terms of the manufacturing industry, it provides the public with a wide range of goods. A nation's economy greatly benefits from the manufacturing sector.

The fundamental characteristics of consumer durables are their high unit cost, lengthy lifespans, and low purchase rates. As a result, there is a high degree of engagement in the information search, analysis, and interpretation. In contrast to purchasing several non-durables where the behaviours are more spontaneous, the decision-making process regarding purchase of durable goods involves extensive psychological and emotional preparation.

A person's perception of a product's performance (or outcome) will determine whether they feel satisfied or disappointed. The customer is not pleased if the levels drop below their expectations. If the performance meets the customer's expectations, they are happy. They are delighted if the performance meets or exceeds the customer's expectations. The two main objectives of effective marketing are retaining current customers and acquiring new customers. Customer satisfaction is essential for any service or product offered by any organization since they accurately predict consumer loyalty, repurchase rates, and customer retention. The level of expectations that are met or exceeded by a company's products or services is what's meant to assess customer satisfaction. These expectations usually reflect several different aspects of the company's activities, including the actual product, business, or service, as well as how the organisation conducts itself in a global setting.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the socioeconomic status of the target participants who are consumers of durable products in Madurai City.
- To examine the participant's preferences for home goods in terms of the product, cost, location, brand promotion, and advertisement.
- To analyse customer preferences and satisfaction with branded goods.
- To evaluate the general level of customer satisfaction in Madurai City for Washing Machines.
- To offer suggestions to increase customer satisfaction with durable household goods.

### 1.2 Literature Review

[Begam and Jaisankar \(2020\)](#) analysed customer satisfaction with durable products subject to the Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu. According to the author, every consumer has specific desires, and companies are driven to fulfil them. Certain products are bought by customers who believe they will fulfil their needs. This study aims to investigate the level of satisfaction experienced by purchasers of durable goods. For this reason, the researcher is looking at the satisfaction of purchasers with durable goods. The primary data was gathered from the area in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. The researcher chooses 65 responders from the entire population as a sample size.

[Dharmaraj \(2017\)](#) deeply analysed customer behaviour toward purchasing durable products. The research is conducted with participants from the Arni district of Tamil Nadu. The total of respondents to the survey are 100, which includes both males and female. The study was conducted on mobile phones, electric fans, and television. The study's conclusions showed that the most crucial factors consumers consider while purchasing are cost and quality. The importance of advertising in helping consumers learn about things is significant.

[Kumar and Hareesh \(2017\)](#) researched customer behaviour towards purchasing durable products. The research is conducted with participants from the rural areas of the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. The study was conducted on durable products such as mobile phones, mixer grinders, and television. The opportunity for rural merchants to enter the market for other durables is increased. Family members play a significant role in purchasing decisions. They must therefore be thoroughly explored to gain a deeper understanding of rural marketing and develop effective marketing tactics.

[Babakus et al., \(2004\)](#) researched the USA & UK regarding Tolerance for Unethical Consumer Behaviours. The author used to examine customer responses to situations including inappropriate consumer conduct. It has been shown that customers' opinions about questionable practices vary widely depending on their country. Consumers' ethical perspectives are shown to be significantly influenced by age and religion identification but not by gender.

[Farmer \(2016\)](#) studied the evolving consumer durables demand in light of rural consumer trends. The findings indicate that interest in television was significant, with refrigerator demand coming in second. The respondents gathered sufficient information before making their purchases. Additionally, it was discovered that rural consumers' consumption habits and behaviours vary depending on family size.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data analysis and interpretation are based on the primary data collected through structured Questionnaires. The other data sources used for the research analysis are books, journals, online articles, etc.

### 2.1 Sampling Size

A survey of 50 respondents from Madurai city is conducted based on purchasing behaviour and satisfaction with Washing Machines. The percentage analysis and ranking approach have both been used to analyse the gathered data.

## 3.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1

*Socioeconomic Profile of The Sample Respondents*

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	16	32.00
Female	34	68.00
Prefer Not to Say	0	0.00

Age		
Below 18	0	0.00
19 - 35	33	66.00
Above 35	17	34.00
Prefer Not to Say	0	0.00
Educational Qualification		
Graduate	26	52.00
Postgraduate	13	26.00
Doctorate	1	2.00
Diploma	1	2.00
High School	9	18.00
Prefer Not to Say	0	0.00
Monthly Income		
Below ₹10000	11	22.40
₹11000 - ₹20000	14	28.60
₹21000 - ₹30000	8	16.40
Above ₹30000	5	10.20
Prefer Not to Say	11	22.40
Residence		
Yes	100	100.00
No	0	0.00

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Table 1 shows the total respondents, 68% are female, and 32% are male. The maximum of responders is between the ages 19-35 of 66%, followed by the age group Above 35 with 34%. The maximum number of responders completed their education qualification of graduate with 52%, and the second highest qualification with postgraduate with 26%. The maximum number of responders, about 28.6% of monthly income, is between ₹11000 to ₹20000, and about 22% are preferred not to declare their salary. All the respondents of this survey are from the Madurai district.

Table 2

*Are you owning a washing machine in your home?*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	44	88.00
No	6	12.00

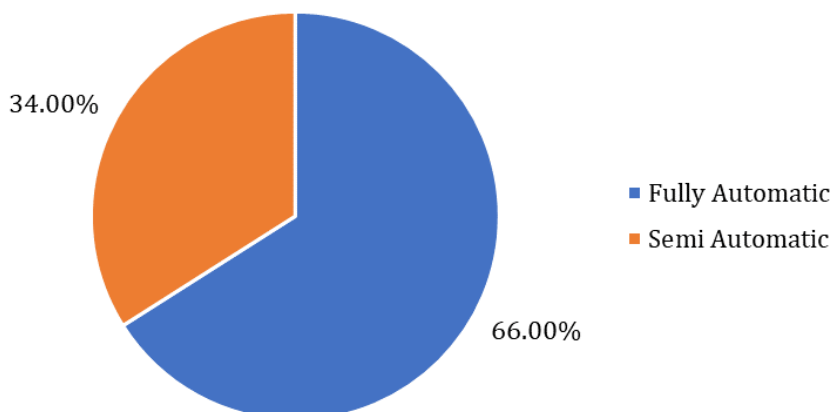
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Table 2 reveals that 88% of respondents have a washing machine in their homes, and 12% are planning to buy a washing machine in the future.

Figure 1

*What is your washing machine model or to be purchased?*



Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 1 reveals the washing machine model in their home. The respondents who already had washing machines declared the model, and the responders who did not have it declared their model needed to purchase. About 66% of responders preferred fully automatic, and 34% preferred semi-automatic washing machines.

Table 3

*Are you keen on Brand Perspective?*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	90.00
No	5	10.00

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Table 3 reveals the opinion about the brand on purchasing a washing machine. 90% of respondents are keen on brand perception, and 10 % are not conscious of the brand on purchasing.

Table 4

*Factors involved in purchasing a washing machine.*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Advertisement	4	8.00
Cost	8	16.00
Brand	38	76.00

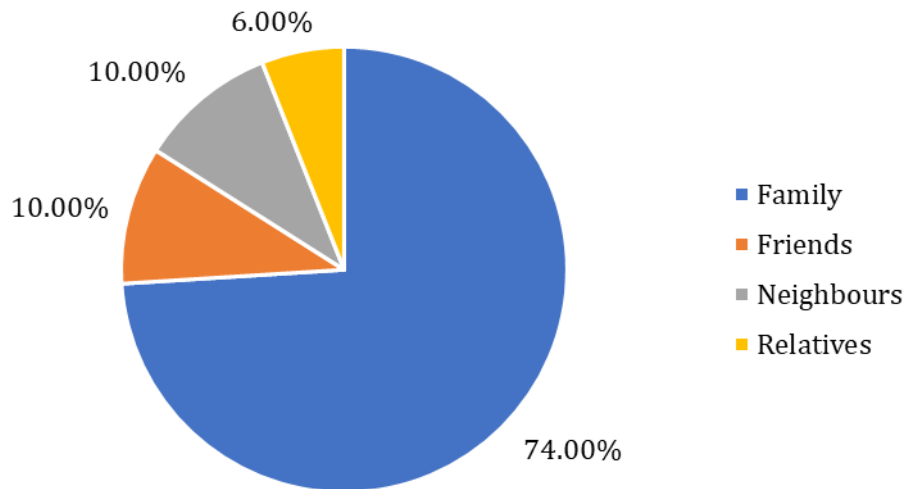
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Table 4 reveals the factors that influenced purchasing the washing machine. 76% of respondents prefer the brand, where 16% consider washing machine costs, and 8% of respondents decide based on the advertisements.

Figure 2

*Members participate in decision-making over purchases.*



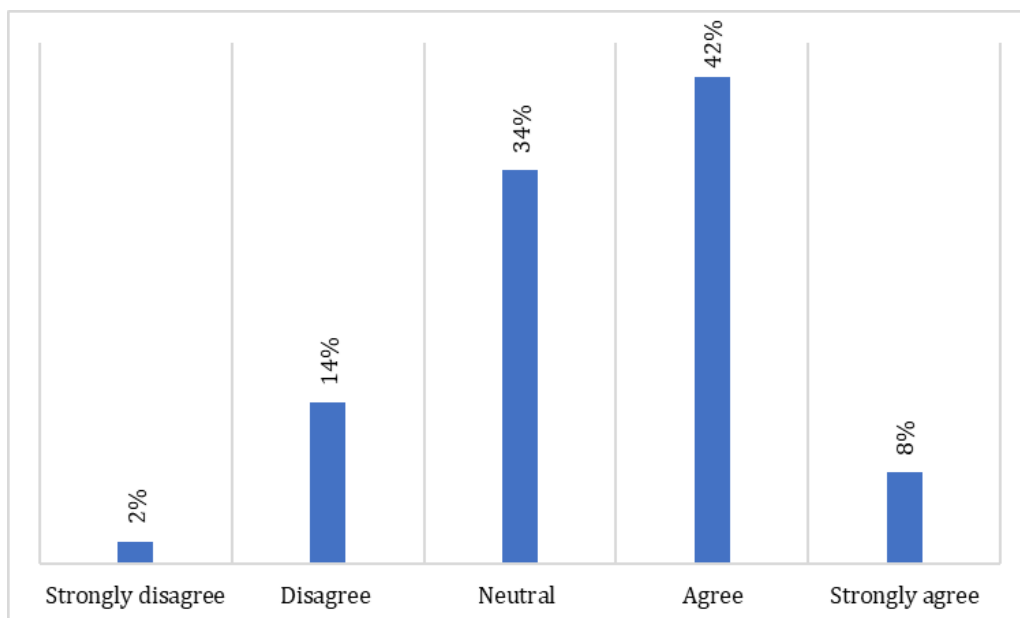
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 2 reveals the major decision makers on purchasing, in which maximum respondents of about 74% decide by discussing with their family members. 10 % of respondents decide based on their friends, and 10 % on their neighbours. Lastly, about 6% of respondents decide based on their relatives.

Figure 3

*Advertisements and promotional activities dominate the purchasing decision.*



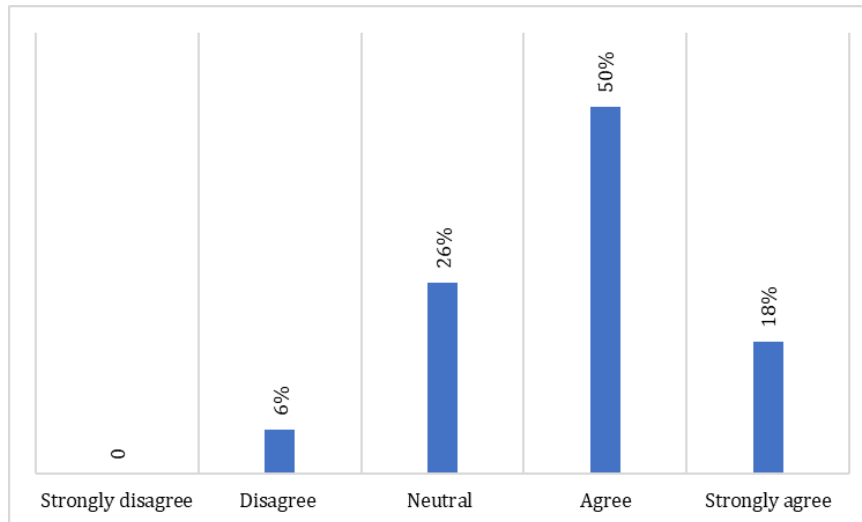
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 3 reveals the opinion that advertisement and promotional activities dominate the purchasing decision. A maximum of 42% of respondents agree, 34% are neutral with their opinion, 14% disagree with this statement, 8% strongly agree, and 2% strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure 4

*Your Opinion that branded products are more quality than unbranded products?*



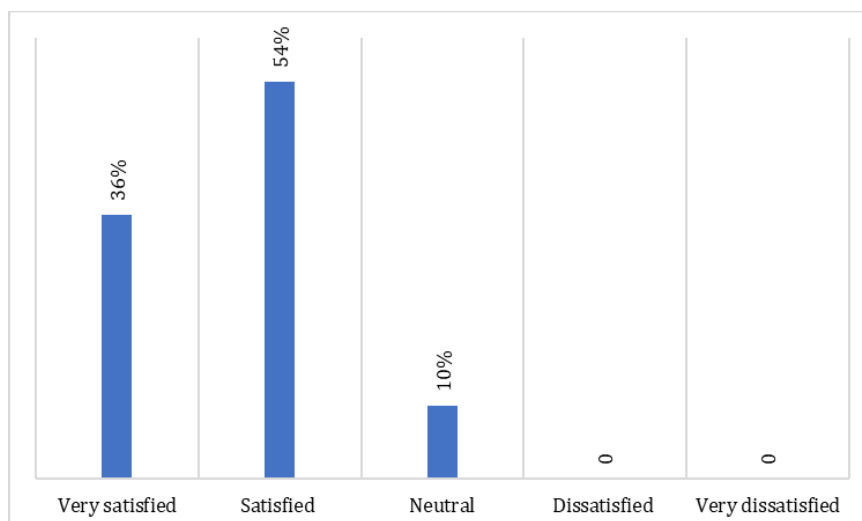
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 4 reveals the respondent's opinions on purchase preference and product quality between the branded and non-branded products. A maximum of 50% of respondents agree that branded products are more quality than non-brand, 26% are neutral with their opinion, and 18% strongly agree that they choose a brand product only. About 6% of respondents disagree with this statement.

Figure 5

*Are you satisfied with your earlier/current purchase of a washing machine?*



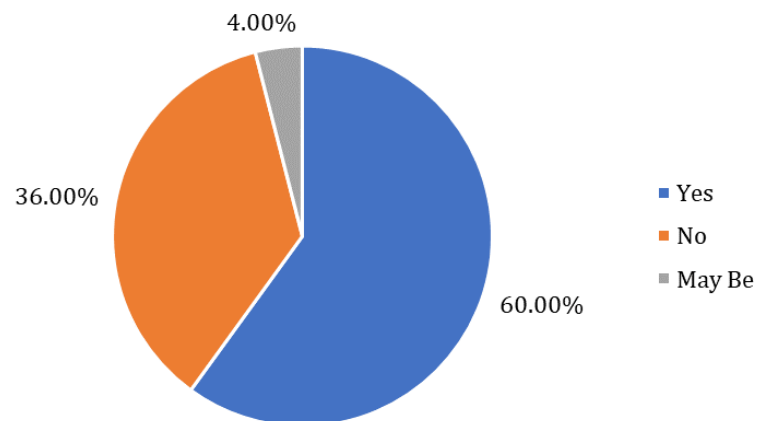
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 5 reveals the respondent's satisfaction level with their purchase of washing machines. About 54% of respondents are satisfied with their purchase, 36% of respondents are very satisfied with their purchase, and 10% of respondents stand neutral.

Figure 6

*On your next purchase, will you prefer the same brand?*



Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Figure 6 reveals the respondent's suggestions on preferring the washing machine brand and model they own for their next purchase or friends, relatives, etc. A maximum of 60% of respondents will prefer the same brand and model. 36% of respondents will not prefer it, and about 4% of respondents oscillate on prefer or not.

#### 4.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

A study of customer satisfaction with regards to purchasing washing machines has revealed that the family unit plays a significant role in the decision-making process. Consequently, product availability can have a notable impact on brand selection, purchase volume, and market share. For rural populations, advertising proves to be the most influential communication channel, and marketers should make efforts to align themselves with advertising mediums. By creating advertisements that appeal to the emotional sensibilities of rural inhabitants, significant increases in sales are possible. After-sales service is a crucial factor that impacts customer satisfaction. Manufacturers should provide prompt and effective after-sales service, including repair, maintenance, and replacement services, to ensure that customers are satisfied with their purchases. Consumers are drawn to products with attractive designs and innovative features. Therefore, manufacturers should invest in product design and development to create unique and appealing products that stand out in the market. Consumers are increasingly conscious of environmental issues and prefer products that are eco-friendly and sustainable. Therefore, manufacturers should adopt sustainable practices in their production processes, use recyclable materials, and reduce waste to meet customer demands and improve satisfaction. By implementing these suggestions, manufacturers can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, increase sales, and gain a competitive edge in the Madurai market.

The primary goal of this study is to evaluate consumer satisfaction with their purchasing of washing machines, particularly for people belonging to the Madurai District. In marketing and business growth, creating and maintaining customer relationships is vital. For establishing this relationship, customer satisfaction is very important. Quality is the key component of the goods and respondents were generally satisfied with the brand and cost. Although it is acknowledged that the customer satisfaction idea is unpredictable in all forms of marketing, this study did its best to gain insight into it.



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