

# The Role of Brand Loyalty in Women's Buying Behavior Towards Washing Machines: An Empirical Study in Coimbatore District

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## Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics of brand loyalty among women consumers in the washing machine segment, a critical category within the Indian white goods market. As primary household decision-makers, women increasingly drive purchasing behavior based on brand equity rather than price alone. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 824 women in the Coimbatore district and analyzed using mean rank analysis and frequency distribution. The findings reveal that post-purchase assurance—specifically warranty services—and technical performance (spinning speed) are the primary drivers of satisfaction. While mechanical noise remains the most significant pain point for users, the study identifies a robust brand loyalty threshold, with over 64% of respondents willing to act as brand advocates and 60% expressing clear repurchase intentions. Furthermore, the results demonstrate a strong cross-category spillover effect, where satisfaction with a washing machine facilitates the purchase of other appliances from the same brand. These insights suggest that for manufacturers to maintain a competitive edge, strategic focus must shift from transactional pricing to building a comprehensive brand experience rooted in reliable after-sales support and functional excellence.

**Keywords:** Brand Loyalty, Consumer Behavior, Women Consumers, Washing Machines, White Goods, Coimbatore District, After-Sales Service, Brand Equity.

## Introduction

In the durable goods segment, brand equity is a multidimensional strategic asset. For high-involvement products like washing machines, a trusted brand conveys a credible promise of quality, reliability, and post-purchase satisfaction. Among the dimensions of brand equity, brand loyalty refers to the emotional and behavioral attachment a consumer has toward a brand. This emotional connection drives repeat purchases and insulates the brand from competitive threats, thereby enhancing customer lifetime value.

This study is specifically directed toward understanding the role of brand loyalty in women's buying behavior towards washing machines. Women in modern Indian households frequently serve as the primary users and decision-makers for functional appliances.

## Review of Literature

The conceptual framework of this study is built on existing scholarship on brand equity, consumer behavior, and the specific dynamics of the home-appliance market in India.

**Brand Equity and Loyalty** Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service. Among these assets, brand loyalty is identified as the core dimension of brand equity, representing the attachment a customer has to a brand. Keller (2001) further advanced this by introducing the "Customer-Based Brand Equity" (CBBE) model, emphasizing that building a strong brand involves creating deep, broad brand awareness and ensuring strong, favorable, and unique brand associations.

**Consumer Behavior in White Goods:** The Indian "white goods" market—comprising heavy consumer durables such as washing machines—has undergone a paradigm shift. Khan and Rahman (2021) observed that as household incomes rise and urbanization accelerates, brand equity becomes a primary driver of purchase decisions. In high-involvement categories, consumers do not merely buy a product; they buy the reliability and status associated with a brand name.

**Women as Decision Makers.** Specifically regarding the role of gender in purchasing, literature suggests that women prioritize functional reliability and post-purchase security. Research by Khan and Jain (2018) indicates that, for

washing machines, women's decision-making often involves a rigorous evaluation of technical performance (e.g., spinning speed) and the availability of responsive customer care.

**Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions** Munir and Putra (2021) established that product quality and brand image are significant precursors to brand loyalty. Their study on Samsung washing machine users demonstrated that when functional expectations are met, the resulting satisfaction directly translates into brand advocacy and a higher probability of repeat purchases. This is supported by Kotni (2020), who highlighted that in the Indian context, after-sales service is often the "make-or-break" factor for long-term brand commitment in the consumer electronics sector.

### Objectives

1. To examine the duration of usage: Understanding the appliance lifecycle and typical replacement periods for washing machine users in Coimbatore.
2. To identify key satisfaction drivers: Ranking the technical and service-oriented factors (e.g., warranty, spinning speed, smart features) that contribute to consumer satisfaction.
3. To analyze common product issues: Determining the most disruptive problems (e.g., noise, spinning issues) faced by users and how they impact the ownership experience.
4. To assess brand advocacy: Measuring women consumers' willingness to recommend their current brand to others as a metric of loyalty.
5. To evaluate future behavioral intentions: Investigating repurchase intentions and the tendency for cross-category brand loyalty (purchasing other appliances from the same manufacturer).

### Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research design, gathering quantitative data from 824 women consumers residing in the Coimbatore district. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and evaluated using statistical tools such as mean rank analysis and frequency distribution.

**Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency distributions and percentages were used to profile the ownership lifecycle and categorical responses (e.g., willingness to recommend).

**Mean Rank Analysis (Garrett's Ranking Technique Logic):** To identify which factors most significantly contribute to consumer satisfaction and which problems are most disruptive, a mean-rank approach was used. By calculating the average score for each attribute, the researchers could prioritize factors based on their perceived importance to consumers, moving beyond simple frequency to understand the intensity of preference.

### Data Analysis and Findings

#### Duration of Washing Machine Usage

Understanding the appliance lifecycle is critical to analyzing brand loyalty and replacement cycles.

**Table 1: Duration of the Washing Machine Usage**

| Duration of Use | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| 1 to 3 years    | 198       | 24.0    |
| 3 to 5 years    | 237       | 28.8    |
| 5 to 7 years    | 227       | 27.5    |
| 7 to 10 years   | 79        | 9.6     |

|                |            |              |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Above 10 years | 83         | 10.1         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>824</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

A significant proportion of women consumers have used their washing machines for either 3 to 5 years (28.8%) or 5 to 7 years (27.5%). This data suggests that the typical product lifecycle for washing machines in this group falls within the 3 to 7-year range. The concentration of usage within this period highlights a key opportunity for manufacturers. By focusing on marketing strategies, service renewal offers, and upgrade incentives during this window, companies can effectively target potential repeat buyers. These efforts are crucial for not only encouraging product replacement but also for reinforcing brand loyalty among existing customers.

### 3.2 Factors Related to Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a primary antecedent to brand loyalty.

**Table 2: Factors Related to Satisfaction with Using a Washing Machine**

| <b>Factors</b>                                    | <b>Mean Rank</b> | <b>Rank</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Warranty service                                  | 8.21             | 1           |
| Spinning speed of the washing machine             | 7.97             | 2           |
| Size, dimension, and color of the washing machine | 7.94             | 3           |
| Smart features                                    | 7.93             | 4           |
| Washing machine capacity                          | 7.88             | 5           |
| After-sales service                               | 7.73             | 6           |
| Customer care response                            | 7.72             | 7           |
| Auto dispense feature                             | 7.66             | 8           |
| Noise of the washing machine                      | 7.39             | 9           |
| Setting availability                              | 7.27             | 10          |
| Electricity consumption                           | 7.23             | 11          |
| Instalment arrangement made                       | 7.17             | 12          |
| Sales promotion available for the washing machine | 6.53             | 13          |

| Factors              | Mean Rank | Rank |
|----------------------|-----------|------|
| Price of the product | 6.38      | 14   |

Warranty service, with a mean rank of 8.21, is the most significant factor affecting customer satisfaction. This finding highlights the critical role of post-purchase assurance and support in shaping consumer perceptions. Beyond warranty service, other aspects such as spinning speed, design dimensions, and smart features also play a vital role in determining satisfaction levels. These performance-oriented and feature-driven factors are valued highly by consumers.

In contrast, financial elements like price (mean rank: 6.38) and sales promotion availability (mean rank: 6.53) are ranked lowest among the satisfaction factors. This suggests that, for most customers, monetary considerations are secondary to the product's reliability and the assurance provided by post-purchase services. The decision-making process is thus more influenced by how well the appliance functions and the support received, rather than by cost or promotional offers alone.

### Problems Faced While Using the Appliance

Product failures severely test consumer loyalty.

**Table 3: Problems Faced While Using the Washing Machine**

| Factors                                 | Mean Rank | Rank |
|---|-----------|------|
| Washer bounces loudly (noise)           | 6.00      | 1    |
| Problem with water filling up           | 5.90      | 2    |
| Spinning problem                        | 5.74      | 3    |
| Leakage of water in the washing machine | 5.57      | 4    |
| The washing machine moves around        | 5.51      | 5    |
| The washer door doesn't open            | 5.44      | 6    |
| Blockage in the drain hose              | 5.34      | 7    |
| The washer is ruining clothing          | 5.23      | 8    |
| Washer not turning on                   | 5.18      | 9    |
| Drain pump not working                  | 5.09      | 10   |

Excessive noise, with a mean rank of 6.00, has emerged as the most disruptive and frequently reported issue among users. This concern surpasses other problems, such as water-filling difficulties and spinning malfunctions. Such core functional failures directly degrade the washing machine's overall performance and user satisfaction. The prominence

of these issues clearly indicates the necessity for manufacturers to focus greater attention on noise reduction and ensuring mechanical stability in their product designs. Addressing these key areas is essential to enhancing both operational efficiency and the customer experience for washing machines.

### Willingness to Recommend the Brand

Recommendation is a direct behavioral manifestation of brand loyalty.

**Table 4: Willingness to Recommend Washing the same Brand to Others**

| Willingness to Recommend | Frequency  | Percent      |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes                      | 531        | 64.5         |
| Sometimes                | 268        | 32.5         |
| No                       | 25         | 3.0          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>824</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

A clear majority of women consumers (64.5%) are willing to recommend their washing machine brand. This finding suggests high levels of satisfaction, trust, and perceived value among these users. Furthermore, only 3.0% report being unwilling to recommend their brand, indicating strong overall brand goodwill among consumers. This positive sentiment can be strategically leveraged through referral programmes to enhance the brand's reputation further and reach.

### Intention of Repurchasing the Same Brand

**Table 5: Intention of Repurchasing the Same Brand of Washing Machine in the Future**

| Intention    | Frequency  | Percent      |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes          | 496        | 60.2         |
| Sometimes    | 295        | 35.8         |
| No           | 33         | 4.0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>824</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The data indicate that approximately 60.2% of consumers are willing to repurchase from the same brand. This figure highlights a robust potential for brand retention among existing customers. In light of this, manufacturers are advised to leverage such loyalty by maintaining consistent service quality. Furthermore, offering attractive incentives for upgrades can help reinforce loyal customers' commitment and encourage repeat purchases.

### 3.6 Cross-Category Purchases

**Table 6: Purchase of Other Products from the Same Washing Machine Brand**

| Purchase other Products | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes                     | 479        | 58.1         |
| Sometimes               | 289        | 35.1         |
| No                      | 56         | 6.8          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>824</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Loyalty towards a washing machine brand frequently leads consumers to purchase additional appliances from the same manufacturer. According to the data, 58.1% of consumers chose to buy other products from the same brand, indicating strong confidence in consistent quality across the entire product range. This behaviour demonstrates that satisfaction with one appliance can positively influence perceptions of the brand as a whole, encouraging repeat purchases and further deepening brand loyalty.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

##### Impact of Brand Loyalty on Women's Buying Behaviour in Washing Machines

Brand loyalty plays a pivotal role in shaping women's purchasing decisions within the washing machine segment. Unlike consumers who focus primarily on price, women tend to value post-purchase assurance, such as warranty service and customer care, as well as dependable functional performance—including aspects like spinning speed and advanced smart features. These factors are central to fostering brand satisfaction and trust.

The strong inclination among women consumers to recommend their chosen brand, with a recommendation rate of 64.5%, and a high repurchase intention of 60.2%, highlights the direct link between positive, long-term user experiences and enduring brand commitment. This loyalty is not merely transactional but is rooted in consistent, reliable product performance and supportive after-sales service.

For manufacturers aspiring to lead the market, it is essential to deliver a comprehensive brand experience. This includes ensuring robust appliance quality and providing dependable after-sales support, both of which are crucial to nurturing and sustaining unwavering loyalty among women buyers.

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