

A STUDY ON BRAND LOYALTY AND BRAND PREFERENCE OF DOVE PRODUCTS AMONG THE CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the level of brand loyalty and brand preference of customers toward Dove products in Coimbatore City. The research adopts a descriptive design using primary data collected from 204 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Percentage analysis and chi-square tests were used to analyze consumer awareness, usage patterns, satisfaction, loyalty, and switching behavior. The findings reveal that Dove enjoys strong brand awareness, positive brand image, and moderate customer loyalty. However, a considerable number of respondents remain neutral or are open to switching brands, indicating scope for improvement. The study highlights the importance of emotional branding, product quality, and value perception in strengthening long-term customer loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Brand Preference, Consumer Behavior, Dove Products, Personal Care Industry

Introduction

In the highly competitive personal care industry, brand loyalty and brand preference have become key determinants of a brand's long-term success. Consumers today are influenced not only by product quality and price but also by brand image, trust, and emotional connection. Dove, a leading personal care brand, has established a strong market presence through its focus on gentle formulations and inclusive branding. This article examines consumers' brand loyalty and brand preference towards Dove products, highlighting the factors that influence satisfaction, usage behavior, and repeat purchase intentions.

Research Background

Brand loyalty and brand preference are crucial concepts in consumer behavior studies, especially in competitive markets like personal care products. With a growing number of brands offering similar benefits, understanding how and why consumers choose a particular brand has become important for marketers and researchers. Dove, known for its gentle formulations and strong brand identity, offers a good context to explore these concepts. This study investigates consumer perceptions, preferences, and loyalty towards Dove products to provide insights into buying behavior and factors that influence repeat purchases.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze customer brand loyalty towards Dove products.
- To examine factors influencing brand preference and repeat purchase behavior.

Statement of the Problem

The personal care market is highly competitive, with many brands offering similar products and benefits. Although Dove has established a strong brand image and customer base, changing consumer preferences, price sensitivity, and availability of alternative brands may affect customer loyalty and brand preference. Therefore, it is necessary to study the level of brand loyalty and the factors influencing brand preference towards Dove products among consumers.

Scope of the study

The study focuses on analyzing brand loyalty and brand preference towards Dove products among consumers in the selected study area. It examines customer awareness, usage pattern, satisfaction level, and factors influencing purchase decisions. The findings provide insights into consumer behavior in the personal care product segment.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to a specific geographical area.
- The sample size is small and selected based on convenience.
- The study is based on respondents' opinions, which may involve bias.
- Time constraints restricted a more detailed analysis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling plan

The study used convenience sampling, and 204 responses were collected through Google Forms. The respondents included male and female consumers aged below 18 and above 18–50 years from urban areas of Coimbatore who are users or aware of Dove products.

Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling was adopted due to easy accessibility and willingness of respondents. The survey was circulated through social media, email, and messaging platforms. This method enabled quick and cost-effective data collection, though it may not fully represent the entire population.

Methods of the study

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources of information. The questionnaire is the source of collecting primary data and the secondary data are collected from various books, journals, websites.

1. **Primary data** – Primary data refers to information collected firsthand for the first time. In this study, primary data was gathered using a well-designed structured questionnaire, and the required information was collected through Google Forms.

I had a set of 25 questions and requested to the respondents for the correct information's through google forms.

2. **Secondary data** – secondary data is a type of data that has been collected in the past. It includes various information's from books, websites etc.

Statistical tool

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi square

Percentage Analysis

Percentage analysis is a statistical tool used to analyse and interpret the data collected from respondents. It helps in understanding the distribution of responses and comparing different categories in a simple and meaningful manner.

The formula used for percentage analysis is:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Respondents}}{\text{Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

Chi- square

Chi-square is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data one would expect to obtain according to specific hypothesis. The chi-square test is always testing what scientists call the null hypothesis, between the expected and observed states that there is no significant difference result.

The formula for calculating:

$$\text{Chi-square} = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Percentage Analysis

- Brand Awareness: 74.1% of respondents are aware of Dove, showing strong market recognition.
- Product Usage: 70.2% of respondents use Dove products, indicating good market penetration.
- Brand Preference: 48.8% prefer Dove, while 29.3% remain neutral, suggesting moderate preference.
- Customer Satisfaction: 68.5% are satisfied with product quality, reflecting positive quality perception.
- Brand Loyalty: Only 32.7% show strong loyalty, while a large neutral segment (41.5%) indicates potential for improvement.

Chi-square Analysis

Chi-square analysis between age and customer support experience

Null hypothesis(H₀): There is no significant association between age and customer support experience. Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is a significant association between age and customer support experience.

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.193	9	0.033
Likelihood Ratio	17.330	9	0.044
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.085	1	0.079
N of Valid Cases	152		

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.033) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant association between age and customer support experience. Respondents aged 18–45 rated customer support more positively, while older respondents reported fewer interactions. This suggests that customer support satisfaction varies significantly across age groups.

Chi-square analysis between gender and customer support experience

Null hypothesis(H₀): There is no significant relationship between gender and customer support experience. Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is a significant relationship between gender and customer support experience.

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.874	3	0.599
Likelihood Ratio	2.256	3	0.521
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.190	1	0.663
N of Valid Cases	150		

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.599) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant relationship between gender and customer support experience. Both males and females reported similar satisfaction levels, showing uniform and unbiased service quality.

Findings

- Dove shows strong market presence with high brand awareness (74.1%) and good product usage (70.2%).
- Brand preference is moderate, with 48.8% preferring Dove and a sizeable neutral group (29.3%).
- Customer satisfaction with product quality is high at 68.5%, but strong brand loyalty remains low (32.7%).
- Chi-square analysis reveals a significant association between age and customer support experience, with younger respondents (18–45) reporting higher satisfaction.
- No significant relationship exists between gender and customer support experience, indicating uniform and unbiased service quality.

Suggestions

- Strengthen customer loyalty programs to convert neutral users into loyal customers.
- Enhance digital and social media engagement to influence younger consumers.
- Improve value-for-money perception through offers and bundled promotions.
- Focus on emotional branding campaigns to deepen customer attachment.
- Reduce brand switching by highlighting product differentiation and long-term benefits.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Dove holds a strong position in terms of brand awareness, reputation, and customer satisfaction in the personal care market. While customers generally perceive Dove as trustworthy and high-quality, brand loyalty remains moderate due to increasing competition and brand-switching behavior. By focusing on emotional engagement, consistent quality, and value-driven strategies, Dove can strengthen customer loyalty and sustain long-term brand preference.

Review of literature

- Lindsay Morel (2009): Evaluated the effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, focusing on its social impact on women's perception of beauty and its role in cause marketing to strengthen brand value.
- Jessica Diény (2015): Analyzed the Dove Real Beauty Campaign from marketing, public relations, and gender studies perspectives, highlighting both its success in female empowerment and challenges in sustaining impact.
- Rachana Chaurasiya (2015): Studied the global evolution of the Dove brand, emphasizing consistent messaging, cultural adaptability, and confidence-building as key drivers of long-term brand success.
- Grace Abou Zeid (2010): Examined Dove advertisements using multimodal and verbal grammar analysis to understand how advertising language influences consumer perception.
- Reshma M. Nath (2012): Analyzed demand and usage of Dove shampoo in India, noting higher preference among upper and middle-class consumers and the brand's prestige pricing strategy.
- S. M. Tanvir Kabir et al. (2019): Studied Dove in Bangladesh, highlighting effective use of the marketing mix (4Ps) and strong consumer-centric branding to build trust and loyalty.

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