

To Investigate Customer's Perception on Brand Loyalty for Household  
Appliances in Mumbai, India

Wilson Lobo

Masters in Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2016.

## **Abstract**

### **To Investigate Customer's Perception on Brand Loyalty for Household Appliances in Mumbai, India.**

**Wilson Lobo**

The purpose of this study was to investigate customer's perceptions on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India. For this study, the researcher used qualitative approach. The researcher conducted two focus groups with the household owners in Mumbai. This focus group discussion allowed the researcher to get in-depth knowledge about the opinions and perception of the participants. The data collected were then analysed using thematic analyses and several key themes were formed. The result of this research shows that, majority of the participants were brand loyal and influential factors like experience, advertisements, loyalty schemes, price, perceived quality and customer satisfaction affected their repurchase behaviour for household appliances. The findings of this research also pointed out that, consumer's preference with regards to Indian versus international brand varied greatly from one participant to another.

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## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor Dr. Louise Maguire for her support and guidance in the completion of this dissertation.

I would also like to offer my special thanks to all the participants who took part in my focus group. Your input was greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank my parents, my brother and my friends for their support and understanding.

Finally, I would like to thank all my class mates. It has truly been an enriching year with you all.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Abstract</b> .....                                      | i   |
| <b>Submission of Thesis and Dissertation</b> .....         | ii  |
| <b>Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library</b> ..... | iii |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....                              | iv  |
| <b>Chapter 1-Introduction</b> .....                        | 1   |
| 1.1 Statement of Problem .....                             | 2   |
| 1.2 Importance of Study .....                              | 3   |
| 1.3 Scope of the Study .....                               | 3   |
| 1.4 Structure and Overview of this Research .....          | 4   |
| <b>Chapter 2- Literature Review</b> .....                  | 6   |
| 2.1 Introduction .....                                     | 6   |
| 2.2- Customer Perception .....                             | 6   |
| 2.3- Brand Loyalty .....                                   | 7   |
| 2.4- Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty .....                 | 9   |
| 2.4.1 Perceived Brand Quality .....                        | 9   |
| 2.4.2 Price .....  | 10  |
| 2.4.3 Brand Name .....                                     | 10  |
| 2.4.4 Customer Satisfaction .....                          | 11  |
| 2.4.5 Brand Experience .....                               | 12  |
| 2.5- Home Appliances Market in India .....                 | 13  |
| 2.6- Home Appliances and Brand Loyalty .....               | 14  |
| 2.7 Conclusion .....                                       | 15  |
| <b>Chapter 3- Methodology</b> .....                        | 16  |
| 3.1 Introduction .....                                     | 16  |
| 3.2 Research Question and Objectives .....                 | 16  |
| 3.2.1 Research Question .....                              | 16  |
| 3.2.2 Research Objective 1 .....                           | 16  |
| 3.2.3 Research Objective 2 .....                           | 17  |
| 3.3 Research Philosophy .....                              | 17  |
| 3.4 Research Design .....                                  | 18  |
| 3.5 Research Methods .....                                 | 19  |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 3.5.1 Quantitative Research.....                                      | 19        |
| 3.5.2 Qualitative Research.....                                       | 19        |
| 3.5.3 Rationale for Qualitative Research.....                         | 19        |
| 3.5.4 Alternative Considerations.....                                 | 20        |
| 3.6 Research Approach.....  | 20        |
| 3.7 Focus Groups.....   | 20        |
| 3.8 Sample Size .....   | 21        |
| 3.9 Data Analysis .....   | 21        |
| 3.10 Ethical & Trust Issues.....                                      | 22        |
| 3.11 Limitations.....   | 22        |
| <b>Chapter 4- Findings .....</b>                                      | <b>23</b> |
| 4.1 Introduction.....   | 23        |
| 4.2 Objective 1 .....   | 23        |
| 4.2.1 Experience.....   | 24        |
| 4.2.2 Advertisements .....  | 25        |
| 4.2.3 Retaining customers .....                                       | 26        |
| 4.2.4 Price .....   | 27        |
| 4.2.5 Perceived Quality .....   | 28        |
| 4.2.6 Customer satisfaction .....                                     | 29        |
| 4.3 Objective 2.....  | 30        |
| 4.3.1 Differential Factors:.....                                      | 30        |
| 4.4 Conclusion .....  | 31        |
| <b>Chapter 5- Discussion .....</b>                                    | <b>32</b> |
| 5.1 Introduction.....   | 32        |
| 5.2 Customer's Perception on Brand Loyalty .....                      | 32        |
| 5.3 Customer's Preference for Indian versus International Brands..... | 34        |
| 5.4 Limitations.....  | 35        |
| <b>Chapter 6- Conclusion and Future Research .....</b>                | <b>37</b> |
| 6.1 Introduction.....   | 37        |
| 6.2 Conclusion .....  | 37        |
| 6.2 Future Research Possibilities .....                               | 39        |
| <b>References .....</b>   | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Appendix .....</b>   | <b>50</b> |
| Appendix A .....  | 50        |
| Appendix B .....  | 59        |

## Chapter 1-Introduction

Businesses in today's dynamic environment have to deal with increasing competition, changing customer demands and product differentiation (Tsai, 2011). In this present competitive business environment, what a customer purchases is driven by the perception of the product in their mind. Companies are trying to understand customers' demands, feelings and perception to gain a competitive edge in the market place. Businesses cannot survive in this environment only on the basis of improved product quality, but also need to look at various other factors such as customer retention in order to build long term success. Companies all around the world are having increasing concerns for creating loyalty as this will ultimately lead them to have a greater market share. Marketers have started emphasizing on strategies to retain loyal customer rather than attracting new ones (Aaker, 1992). To accomplish this, brand loyalty plays a great role and has become an interesting area of research for academicians and business owners (Kumar, 2009). Thus, brand loyalty can be defined as the attachment a customer has towards a particular brand (Leahy, 2009).

A number of studies have mentioned that companies who have loyal customers have managed to gain greater market share, high return on investments and reduced marketing cost (Denoue and Saykiewicz, 2009; Singh and Pattanayak, 2014). The finding from the study of Dick and Basu (1994) mentioned that brand loyalty generates positive word of mouth communication which was also agreed by Oliver (1999). On the basis of a 20-80 principle, Kotler and Keller (2005) noted that the top 20% customers may create 80% of a company's profitability hence, stating that the relationship of a company with its customers is very important.

According to Rahaman (2014) customer's perception towards a products attributes greatly influence future buying decision which means that customer perception plays an important role in brand loyalty. Advertisements, loyalty schemes and public relations too influence customer perception towards brand loyalty (Watson and Hill, 2015). Companies in the household appliances

market find customer retention as a great challenge, as these appliances are not purchased frequently and last longer until replacement is required. The consumer durable market in India has changed over the last few years due to reasons such as higher disposable incomes, education, change in lifestyle and advancement in technology (Lakshmi, 2011). A huge consumer class along with being the second fastest growing economy, the consumer durable industry has merged to be one of the fastest growing industries in India (Vijayalakshmi, S. and Mahalakshmi, 2014).

This study focuses on customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India. International research as well as research in India has been conducted to explore brand loyalty for household appliances and have stated that factors such as customer satisfaction, brand experience, after sales service, quality, technology, price and brand name influence brand loyalty (Uma and Sasikala, 2014; Hasan, 2015; Mohanraj, Komarasamy and Loganathan 2014; Li, Wu and Wang 2000). After critically reviewing the literature, the researcher felt that there has been a considerable amount of research done on brand loyalty. However, little attention has been given to brand loyalty from customer's perception. This paper also bridges the gap by examining different factors that influences customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

The phenomenal growth of the Indian industrial sector has encouraged establishments of various industries and production of several different consumer products. The Indian market not only consists of products manufactured in the country, but also products imported from all around the world which is due to the development of transportation system, understanding among different governments and increased innovation which has made the world narrower and has created the world as a single market.

The development of both the national and international markets has led to a growth of alternate products in the Indian market. Due to this fact the Indian consumers can select from a wide range of products and make the best choice depending on their needs. With having freedom to select products and its

impact on purchasing pattern, consumer response and attitude towards a variety of brands in the marketplace is still unseen. It would be worthy to investigate whether consumer purchase repeatedly from their preferred brand in spite of alternate products being available in the market. Hence the overall aim of the study is to investigate customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India which will be achieved with the use of 2 objectives being:

Objective 1- To understand the factors that influences customer's perception on brand loyalty for home appliances.

Objective 2- To understand customer's preference for Indian versus International brands

### **1.2 Importance of Study**

The Indian market has become more competitive in recent years and is still growing toward betterment. The economic future of this country depends greatly on its existing and upcoming industries. The durable market industry can succeed if companies successfully market their products. With increasing competition, companies must aim at understanding customer's wants, preference and reaction to basic factors such as the price, quality of products etc. In short customer satisfaction must be treated as a priority by companies.

As the focus of this study is on customer's perception towards brand loyalty, marketers and companies will be highly benefitted from this study. It will also be helpful to understand consumer's attitude towards the product's attributes such as price, quality and customer's perception of the total image of the manufacturer.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

Researcher limits its scope to selected consumer durable such as washing machine, television, air conditioner and microwave in Mumbai, India. The present study will identify the factors that influence brand loyalty pertaining to the above mentioned household appliance in Mumbai. The results obtained may not be applicable to other categories of household appliances or to other regions of India.

## **1.4 Structure and Overview of this Research**

### Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the chosen research topic along with the statement of problem and the importance of this study. Gap in the literature was identified along with stating the aim and objectives of this study.

### Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides relevant studies in relation to the phenomenon being researched. As this study is seeking to explore customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India, literature in relation to customer's perception, brand loyalty, factors affecting brand loyalty, household appliance market in India and lastly brand loyalty for household appliance will be explored and critically reviewed.

### Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter provides an insight to the methodological approach used by the researcher in carrying out the research process. The chapter begins with research question and objectives followed by justifications of choosing appropriate research philosophy, research design, research methods and methodological approach used along with the explanation of choosing focus group as a method of data collection. Data analysis, Ethical consideration and limitation of this research are also discussed in this chapter.

### Chapter 4 – Findings

This chapter will group the most important information which was collected during focus group discussion into themes using thematic analysis to obtain the set objectives of this study.

### Chapter 5 – Discussion

This chapter will discuss the key findings and will compare it with the secondary research that has been explored in chapter 2. This will allow the researcher to understand if there are any similarity or contrasts between the secondary research and primary.

### Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will conclude the study with determining if the set aims and objectives have been achieved along with the key findings in the research. Further recommendation for future studies will be outlined.

## **Chapter 2- Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on different sections, firstly discovering what is customer perception followed by brand loyalty, factors affecting brand loyalty, home appliances market in India and brand loyalty with regards to home appliances which is the major aspect for this dissertation.

### **2.2- Customer Perception**

The term perception is best described as how one views, interprets understands something based on past experience and personal opinion (Ogara, 2011). Perception is rather subjective as it greatly varies from one individual to another. Perception plays an important role not only from a customer's point of view, but also from an organisations point of view (Kureemun and Fantina,2011). A customer's perception of a brand quality, origin and, price greatly influences future buying decision (Rahaman, 2014). Whereas if a company understands the perception of customers in regards to the product or service they offer, the company would be in a better position to gain knowledge about how the customer views the product or service (Subramaniam, Mohre and Kawde, 2014). It is known that there are various ways which can influence customer perception which is usually through advertising, public relation, loyalty schemes and other media (Watson and Hill, 2015).

Customer experience is most vital to the customer's perception (Newell, 2003). Any negative experience in relation to a product or a service can influence purchasing decision (Fowler and Burrow, 2015). Consumers knowledge and perception with regards to a brand can be enhanced by advertisements and also strengthen the brand loyalty (Samanta, 2014). A quantitative study was carried by Doostar (2013) in order to examine the relationship between advertisement and brand loyalty for kitchen utensils. The study pointed out that advertisement had significant impact on brand loyalty as compared to other variables. Advertisement can also have negative impact (Rao, 2007). The author feels that companies through advertising can increase customer's expectation about the product or service. But when this over promising

advertising do not match the customer expectation it leads to disappointment and thus customer may seek for alternatives.

Customer perception is also influenced by the experience of friends and family which is usually through word of mouth (Khalid, Ahmed and Ahmad, 2013). This is may either lead to being positive or negative feeling towards a brand. A research carried out by Whitley (2014) suggest that, 92% of consumers believe in recommendation of a product or a service given by friends and family. Customer perception is a very critical aspect of any given business, as it greatly influences loyalty and the overall reputation of the business.

### **2.3- Brand Loyalty**

The global market place has created competition among several companies. In order to create a significant position in the market place, marketing specialists need to create and execute several strategies to attract customers. Among these strategies, maintaining brand loyalty is considered to be a favourable option (Mao, 2010).

The concept of brand loyalty has been acknowledged by several researchers over time. (Dick & Basu 1994; Kuusik 2007; Alhabeeb, 2007). Early studies defined brand loyalty as repeated buying behaviour (Farley, 1964; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973) while more recent definitions identified characteristic of brand loyalty as a multidimensional concept (Worthington, Russell Bennett & Hartel, 2009). Some researches in this field have contributed towards identifying how brand loyalty is influenced by individual factors , while the other researchers have worked towards investigating the dimensions or different levels within brand loyalty (Gecti and Zengin, 2013; Kuusik, 2007).

Brand loyalty has been subjected to a number of definitions. Brand loyalty can be defined as consumers' willingness to stay with a brand even after the launch of a rival competitor's new promotion or product and to repeatedly purchase the same product or service from the same brand. (Oliver,1999; Wood, 2004). Kabiraj and Shanmugan (2011), define brand loyalty as the behaviour or intention of a consumer to consciously or subconsciously repurchase a product or service of the brand at a certain time frequency. Brand loyalty has faced many debates regarding whether repurchases of a particular

brand is only due to behavioural attitude which is described as the loyalty of a consumer towards a brand through repeated purchases or something else (Werner and Kumar, 2002). Many researchers have focused their research on this aspect and have identified another dimension that is attitudinal loyalty which is described as, consumers are loyal to a given brand as they have a sense of commitment towards the brand (Khan, Humayun and Sajjad, 2015). A few authors mentioned that loyalty cannot be judged on the basis on mere purchasing behaviour (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Reichheld and Schefter, 2000).

Businesses face several challenges due to advancement in technology along with a dynamic competitive market place. In today's market place it is difficult for a company to differentiate its products from potential competitors as products are easily imitated. In this instance brand loyalty is noted to be a solution that can help businesses to create a long term competitive advantage (Tabaku, E. and Zerellari Mersini, 2015). The studies of Chegini (2010) and Tripathi (2009) also supported the importance of brand loyal customers as a way to maintain growth and success in the marketplace.

Maintaining brand loyalty is important from an organization's perspective because it helps to ensure that their product or service has the required qualities and hence forms a base for future purchase behaviour. Mokhtar, Amjaad and Husain (2000) explained the role of brand loyalty in future growth and profitability of an organisation. The authors state that, a loyal customer tends to stick to their preferred brand for a long period of time and spend more of their money towards it. Moreover, loyal customers tend to market indirectly for a brand through word of mouth communication.

Companies profitability can be positively influenced by the long life of customer relationship (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Hence a company to some extent must dedicate their marketing efforts towards maintaining, developing and enhancing customer loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994). Increased level of loyal customers leads to return on investments, increase in market share and higher profit margins (Denoue and Saykiewicz 2009). Studies on the other hand have also explored the negative effects of not maintaining customer loyalty on the

profitability of the brand. Kotler, Burton and Deans (2013) mentioned that, it can cost a company 5 times more to win a new customer.

Reinartz and Kumar (2002) critiqued the approach of loyalty and profitability and mentioned that customers are very profitable in the beginning, but over time the profitability falls. Chegini (2010) noted that creating a sense of loyalty among all the customer is not a viable option for companies and hence companies must screen a profitability analysis on customers and invest on in those who promise a profitable relationship. Dick and Basu (1994) also argued that spurious loyal customers who only identify with the brand in terms of discounts and low prices may not be able to increase the company's profitability for a long term perspective. Hence manager must identify such customers and not waste their resources in keeping them loyal as it may not have a significant impact on the long term profitability. However, if companies are looking at creating brand loyalty, marketers should ensure that they have strategies in place to continuously maintain loyal customers (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Brand loyalty can be better understood when different factors that influences customer's decision of being loyal to a specific brand is examined.

## **2.4- Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty**

A number of studies have been carried out in order to investigate factors influencing brand loyalty (Alhedhaif, Lele and Kaifi, 2016; Bobalca, 2014). Brand loyalty depends on how the customer perceives the value of a given product offered by a brand. Price, image, innovation and quality of the product and service are the main components of the perceived value of a brand as seen by a consumer (Fredericks and Salter, 1995).

### **2.4.1 Perceived Brand Quality**

Perceived quality by a consumer has an impact on its loyalty and also helps organizations to maintain its consumer retention rate. It also has a great impact on a consumer's perception about a brand. If a customer has a good perception about the quality of a brand it increases satisfaction, which increases loyalty towards the brand (Recklies, 2015). This so called perceived brand loyalty has an effect on the profitability and positioning of a brand. More

importantly it helps customers to differentiate brands on the basis of how good the quality is (Aaker, 1992). Study carried out by Srivastava R.K (2007) across various product categories like coffee, toothpaste and mobile phones pointed out that factors of brand loyalty may vary for different products. The study concluded that quality was the important variable followed by brand reputation and price. Brucks, Zeithaml and Naylor (2000) mentioned that, the easiest way to measure the quality of a given product is by its durability, performance, features, friendliness and serviceability.

#### **2.4.2 Price**

The price of a product communicates the value positioning of a brand in the marketplace. Cadogan and Foster (2000) mentioned that, for an average customer price plays an important role. According to Keller (2003) and Gounaris and Stathakopoulos (2004), price may not easily influence buying intention of a loyal customer as they will be willing to pay a premium price for their preferred brand. The author also mentioned that, when a loyal customer had a strong belief in the value of their preferred brand, they are unlikely to compare it with alternated products. Loyal customer would be willing to pay for their favoured brand, even if the prices increase to avoid any associated risk with switching to another brand (Yoon and Kim, 2000).

#### **2.4.3 Brand Name**

This is an aspect which is important in attracting customers to purchase and increase repeat purchasing behaviour. Cadogan and Foster (2002) supported this view and mentioned that, a prestigious brand name has the power to attract customer and increase purchasing intention when compared to a not so famous brand. A quantitative study was carried by Uma and Sasikala (2014) in order to investigate customer perception and customer behaviour for selected home appliances. The study pointed out that, brand name played a dominant role in purchasing the home appliances.

#### **2.4.4 Customer Satisfaction**

Oliver (1999) in his attempt to outline brand loyalty mentioned that customer satisfaction plays an integral role in brand loyalty along with the product's quality and an individual's interest towards a given brand. A satisfied customer tends to repurchase a brand a multiple number of times. Hence customer satisfaction has a positive impact on brand loyalty (Ha and John, 2010). Positive purchase is affected by trust and satisfaction, as when customers believe that a brand is trust worthy they tend to purchase more which leads to brand loyalty. This in turn increases customers to spread their experience to other customers through word of mouth (Dick & Basu, 1994).

According to Aydin, Ozer and Arasil (2005), customer satisfaction depends on various factors such as features of the product, experience of the product, purchase experience and post experience of the product. These authors also mentioned that the performance of the brand and customer expectation contribute towards customer satisfaction. On the other hand, Shukla (2004) views customer satisfaction as a psychological aspect. The analysis is based on the fact that a product's performance is based on the differentiation between the actual and the expected performance.

Customer expectations differ in relation to different products along with the features. Awan and Rehman (2014) carried out a quantitative study in order to investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty for consumer durable goods in Pakistan. The study concluded that, customer satisfaction influenced brand loyalty. Another study conducted by Lee and Lee (2013) emphasised customer satisfaction. The study was carried out in order to investigate the loyalty in regards to actual repurchase behaviour of mobile phones. The study concluded that, there was a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioural loyalty and customer satisfaction had an influential effect on repurchase intention and the behaviour of different groups. However, the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer behaviour at individual level was excluded in the study.

Interestingly Kuusik (2007) in their study mentioned that even if consumers are unsatisfied with their brand, they may not switch to an alternate brand due

to inertia. Reasons contributing to this may be that the alternate brand must have failed to provide accurate information to the consumer about the brand or simply the consumer feels that alternate brand is just as bad as their preferred brand.

#### **2.4.5 Brand Experience**

Brand experience is considered to be an important element as it is vital to understand customer behaviour which in turn helps a brand to build new products and services. In the work of Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) brand experience was defined as being subjective, which is described as a consumer's feeling, behaviour and response to various brand stimuli. It is known that when a customer is searching for a product they are exposed to shape, colour and background design of a brand which are all elements of brand related stimuli. The way an individual experience a brand varies from different situations, such as gaining experience through purchasing and using a product or indirect brand experience through advertisements and different marketing strategies. The study also mentioned that there is a connection between brand experience and brand loyalty as when a customer has a positive experience of a brand, they will tend to repurchase it several times.

Iglesias, Singh and Batista- Foguet (2011) conducted a study in order to investigate the direct and indirect relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. The researchers noted that commitment facilitates a relation between brand loyalty and experience for all the products studied which were laptops, sneakers and cars. However, the study failed to include other determinants like trust, brand affect and customer satisfaction.

It can be noted that there is vast literature available on the factors affecting brand loyalty. The factors mentioned above may be specific to different durable goods. Some of these factors may overlap in the household appliance sector of durable goods. Hence the author feels it would be worthwhile to understand which factors that affect brand loyalty are present in the household appliance market.

## **2.5- Home Appliances Market in India**

Mechanical appliances which undertake household functions are known as home appliance. The characteristics of home appliances are that it doesn't not wear out quickly, expensive and are technologically advancing with time. Television, air conditioner, washing machine, refrigerators and microwave can be considered as some of the major household appliances (Kaur and Chadha, 2014).

The Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association suggests that India will rank fifth in the world by the year 2025 in the home appliance market. Also it is estimated that from 2014-2020 the television market will grow at a 20%, air conditioners at a 7%, washing machines at a 9% and refrigerators at a 10% (Economic Times, 2015). This rise directly indicates that the home appliances are gaining popularity in India.

According to Ernst and Young (2015), India has witnessed a change in its economic conditions which has been boasted through advancement in technology, increase in disposable income, increase in working women and standard of living. Not only this the market share of the consumer durables market has significantly changed. Initially companies such as Voltas, Kelvinator and Godrej were considered as the chief players in the durable markets and had about a 90% of the market share. However, post liberalisation of the Indian market led many foreign companies to have market share of the consumer durable goods market (Shailesh and Mishra, 2015). These multinational companies dominating the home appliance market were Samsung, Hitachi, Whirlpool and LG.

In India, the entry of multinational companies has increased competition and posed as a challenge for local brands. Multinational companies have managed to have a significant market share in the Indian consumer durable market due to superior product offerings at a good price (Balakrishnan, Mitra and Bapna,2013). A few Indian companies are also trying to compete with these multinational companies to earn a share of the consumer durable marketplace. Moreover, local brands currently have changed their marketing strategy. Low cost home appliances with similar quality and features like those of the larger

brands have been introduced (Thompson, 2012). This was also agreed by Chattopadhyay (2012) that Indian brands are at par with the international brand on the basis of technology, performance and quality.

A quantitative study was carried out by Ismail, Masood and Tawab (2012) to see consumers' preference of international brand over local brand. Variables such country of origin, price, social status, quality was considered in the research. The study pointed out that quality of the product was the major factor perceived by consumer.

## **2.6- Home Appliances and Brand Loyalty**

This dissertation is focused on customer's perception of brand loyalty towards home appliances, hence it is important to review the literature on brand loyalty towards home appliances.

Consumers develop expertise in fast moving consumer goods as they are bought in larger frequency. For consumer durable goods, in this case home appliances, a huge investment is needed and on the other hand, consumer may not be fully knowledgeable about it. So, purchase decision of these goods are made after much consideration (Srivastava and Sharma, 2013).

Consumer may not re-purchase home appliances in short frequencies. This does not mean that brand loyalty is not important. Grewal, Mehta and Kardes (2004) pointed out that there are two main reasons why consumer purchase durable consumer goods. First is "forced" purchase or performance "obsolescence". Motivation towards this purchase decision arises due to ineffective and inefficient performance of the current durable good. The second is "unforced" or "fashion technological obsolescence". Purchase of a durable good in this case occurs due to any technological innovations or new enhancements, which tends to create an excitement in consumers.

A quantitative study by Hasan (2015) focused on brand preference and factors influencing brand preference with regards to durable consumer goods. The data of 350 respondents was collected using questionnaire in Lucknow city of India. The research pointed out that quality, technology and price plays an essential role in determining the attitude towards consumer durable goods. This study also states that customers tend to buy a particular brand because

of the benefits it has to offer. In this case a company can charge a higher price as the company is aware of the customer's loyalty. The research was limited to only one city and small sample size. Kalaiselvi and Muruganandam (2013) explored the attitude of consumers towards promotional schemes while purchasing household appliances. Researchers found that brand name plays a significant role when purchasing home appliances even if there are several promotional schemes.

Li, Wu and Wang (2000) in their research also contributed towards identifying key differentiating factors influencing repeated purchases and discovered that product characteristics, marketing capability, brand popularity and perceived quality are the factors influencing brand loyalty for the Taiwan appliance market. Mohanraj, Komarasamy and Loganathan (2014) added factors such as after sales service, warranty, discounts, store location as factors that can affect brand loyalty for the Indian refrigerator market.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The literature review has discussed existing literature on customer perception, brand loyalty, factors affecting brand loyalty and home appliances. The above literature indicates that there has been a significant contribution by researchers in the field of brand loyalty and home appliances. The researcher feels it would be worthwhile to explore customer perception of brand loyalty for household appliances from the Indian market context. Through the literature review it is evident that the Indian market has become more competitive due to the entry of multinational companies. It would be worthwhile to explore as to how the Indian consumers base their reason to purchase one brand over the other. This is where the different factors will play a major role and a detailed investigation will be done to identify factors such as brand experience, satisfaction, quality, price and brand name in the Indian market for durable goods and how they affect brand loyalty since household appliances are not purchased frequently, but are purchased due to forced or unforced factors.

## Chapter 3- Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an extensive description of the methodological approach used by the researcher in carrying out the research process. This chapter begins with research question and objectives, research philosophy, research design, research methods, justification of the methodological approach used along with the explanation of choosing focus group interviews, data collection and data analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations of this research are also discussed in this chapter.

### 3.2 Research Question and Objectives

A research question is a specific way to state the overall research problem, if this question is too broad the information received will be extensive and of little use to the researcher (Kolb,2008). Once the research question along with the aims and objectives have been identified, the researcher can formulate necessary steps to decide how the research question can be achieved (Horn, 2009). The research objectives are formulated to answer the research question and this research consists of one research question which is supported by two objectives.

#### 3.2.1 Research Question

*To investigate customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India.*

#### 3.2.2 Research Objective 1

*To understand the factors that influences customer's perception on brand loyalty for home appliances.*

The researcher feels that in order to study customer's perception on brand loyalty, it is first important to examine the level of awareness. To understand this better, participants were asked open ended questions on how familiar are they with this concept and to which brand do they display loyalty towards. This objective also seeks to examine the factors that affect brand loyalty for home appliances amongst Mumbai consumers. The researcher felt it was important to investigate whether these factors affect brand loyalty in Indian context as

there are several studies that have examined the relationship of different factors with brand loyalty such as Iglesias et al (2011) examined relationship of brand experience and Li et al. (2000) investigated key differentiating factors influencing repeated purchases in Taiwan market. To best understand this relationship of different factors, participants were asked questions on influential factors. This was followed up with another probing questions as to what aspect of brand appeals and inspires loyalty.

### **3.2.3 Research Objective 2**

*To understand customer's preference for Indian versus International brands.*

This objective seeks to examine the customer's preference for Indian versus International brands. As discussed in the literature review that Indian market was dominated by chief Indian brands like Voltas, Godrej and Kelivinator. However, post liberalisation international brands such as LG, Samsung and Whirlpool entered the Indian market to gain market share (Shailesh and Mishra, 2015). This also increased the competition for the local brands. Today in Indian market there are numerous brands and this is why researcher feels it is important to study this objective. In order to understand this better, participants were asked questions on their opinion towards Indian versus International brands.

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

The philosophical aspect of the research must be understood in order to select the most appropriate research methodology (Holden and Lynch, 2014). The philosophical framework supports the research and the researcher must select each research process carefully keeping in mind the research aim and objectives (Quinlan, 2011). Hence, the philosophical position must be defined accurately as it assists the researcher to design the structure of the undertaken research.

Saunders and Tosey (2012) mentioned positivism, realism and interpretivism as research philosophies. The positivism philosophy deals with observing and predicting outcomes which includes large samples of quantitative data which can be tested statistically. The realism philosophy is concerned with scientific enquiry wherein reality exist independent of the mind. The researcher's senses

and personal experience play a major aspect in this philosophy. Both qualitative and quantitative data are a part of this philosophy and realism has two forms which are direct and critical realism (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

Studying of social phenomena in their natural environment is the guiding principal for the interpretivism philosophy. The focus of this philosophy is conducting research amongst people and not objects (Hair, Money, Samouel, Celsi and Page, 2003). The main aspect of an interpretivism approach is to understand people's ideas and views in relation to their world (Thomas, 2009). Qualitative data through a small sample and an in-depth interview is likely to be the data collection and analysis technique.

The interpretivism philosophy would be appropriate for this research as the researcher's aim is to understand customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances. This will allow the researcher to have a flexible structure aimed at understanding every participant's thoughts and feeling in relation to the main aim of this study.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Research design is the framework for conducting a research which include all the steps necessary to obtain information for set objectives (Malhotra, 2009; Burns and Bush ,2006). Although research objectives are unique, there may be some similarities to other studies which may allow the researcher to make decisions in advance (Burns and Bush, 2006). Research design entails exploratory, descriptive and casual.

Exploratory research is a research design defined to be flexible and unstructured in nature and involves matter which may not be interpreted through quantitative measures (Malhotra, Briks and Wills, 2012). This type of research design may include a non- representative small sample (Malhotra et al. 2012). Methods used to collect data in for this research design are focus groups, observation, interviews, grounded theory and ethnography which allow participants to express their views in relation to the research question (Kolb, 2008).

Exploratory design would be appropriate for this research as it will allow the researcher to get a greater understand of participant's ideas and thoughts in relation to the research question from a small sample size. Since this research design allows for flexibility the researcher can ask additional questions for further elaboration. On the other hand, descriptive research does not suit this dissertation as they are too structured and do not allow for flexibility and causal research will not be suitable as the research question does not need to test cause and effect relationship.

### **3.5 Research Methods**

Research methodology are developed from the research philosophy which assist in deciding the data collection method. Data can be collected through quantitative and/or qualitative methods (Quinlan, 2011).

#### **3.5.1 Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research can be undertaken if the researcher wants to scientifically test a hypothesis with the use of definite numbers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Surveys, experiments and questionnaires form the means by which quantitative data can be collected.

#### **3.5.2 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research allows the researcher to get an insight of understanding, feelings, ideas, perception and behaviour of people (Blumberg, Donald and Pamela, 2005). Qualitative techniques included in-depth interviews and focus group discussion which allow for greater flexibility and wherein the researcher can design questions for the research.

#### **3.5.3 Rationale for Qualitative Research**

According to Kolb (2008) qualitative research uncovers consumer's opinion belief and attitude rather than facts. As this research is dealing with customer's perception, the researcher felt using qualitative research method would be appropriate as it will provide a greater insight and better understanding of what consumers think about brand loyalty. This method provides greater flexibility as the researcher can ask questions mid-way on the question is the need arises. The researcher would also get an opportunity to grasp better understanding of participant's feelings as the researcher can visually see the

body language and reactions of participants. The researcher feels that there is no necessity to collect data which can be quantified through scales or number.

#### **3.5.4 Alternative Considerations**

Mixed method or triangulation approach can be appropriate in a few cases however, using both may prove costly and time consuming (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, the researcher should avail one research methodology if small to medium sized research projects are being conducted.

#### **3.6 Research Approach**

Research approach can be classified into deductive and inductive. The deductive approach is known for testing a theory wherein a researcher develops a hypothesis or a theory which tested rigorously through a research strategy (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Inductive approach builds a theory which commences after data is collected (Goddard and Melville, 2004).

The research approach undertaken for this research is the inductive approach as the research process was initiated by exploring existing secondary data followed by collecting data through focus group discussion, a form of primary data collection was undertaken to understand customer's perception towards brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India. Exploring the data was done through secondary sources such as critically reviewing research papers and reports. Also qualitative research is associated with inductive research approach which include a range of methods to collect data and explore the problem through different perspective (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002).

#### **3.7 Focus Groups**

Focus group is defined as a form of an interview which consist of a small group of people sharing similar characteristics and are present to discuss on a specific topic (Patton, 2002). 6 to 12 respondents can be a part of the focus group who discuss on a specific phenomenon by answering open ended questions which help the researcher in gaining an understanding about the groups perspective (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). Focus groups are said to

be cost effective and provide in depth information within two hours which is of great advantage when compared to individual interviews (Krueger, 1994).

The participants of this focus groups were household owners in Mumbai and the focus group were divided into two. This focus group allowed the researcher to get in-depth knowledge about the opinions and perception of the participants.

The participants for the focus group where contacted a week in advance to notify them about the venue, date and time for the focus group along with basic information on the research topic. This would allow them to further develop their thoughts about this research topic. The focus group discussion for two groups were conducting over two days and each focus group discussion lasted for 45-50 minutes. The questions asked were open ended which allows enriching response quality through greater elaboration. The main focus of this study was to engage the group in discussing about brand choices for household appliances. Questions regarding brand loyalty and influential factors were asked. The discussions were semi-formal which facilitated a more natural flow of information.

To record the discussion, the researcher used his personal laptop and mobile phone. The researcher played the role of a moderator, while an assistant moderator was selected to take down important notes for this study. Post discussion, the data recorded was transcribed and checked with the notes taken by the assistant moderator. The name of the participants was coded to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

### **3.8 Sample Size**

The number of participants to be included in the study contributed to the sample size (Malhotra et al, 2012). The researcher aimed at having a total of 14 participants divided into 2 focus group, however managed to have only 4 in 1 focus group and 6 in the other. 4 participants could not be a part of this study due to unforeseen circumstances.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The audio data was transcribed to a spreadsheet format to be analysed. The analysis process began with using the data reduction method wherein the non-

relevant data was not transcribed thus, focusing solely on the meaningful data keeping in mind the research objectives of this study. The audio was once again checked to ensure that the researcher that transcribed the relevant data. Post transcribing the data, thematic analysis was undertaken to group the data into themes which would assist in answering the research question (Wood, Giles and Percy, 2009). Thematic analysis can be described as segregating data on the basis of themes (Saunders, 2011).

### **3.10 Ethical & Trust Issues**

Ethical issues must be considered by the researcher before initiating the research (Blaxter, 2008). The researcher considered the ethical guidelines stated by NCI and made sure they were adhered to. The researcher informed participants in advance the research aims and objective of this study and that the discussion of the focus group would be recorded, all these aspects is an essential step as mentioned by Oliver (2010). The participants were assured that they could withdraw from the focus group if they wish to at any point. The focus group was conducted at the researcher's house and to make the participants comfortable with each other, the researcher firstly introduced them to initiate an informal conversation. The participants were also made sure that their personal information would be confidential and the data would be used only for the stated purpose.

### **3.11 Limitations**

The initial limitation encountered for this study was that of time. Due to this the researcher was unable to conduct a pilot study focus group before conducting the actual focus group discussion. Also the researcher had to go to Mumbai to conduct a focus group which was to be done within a short period of time. Conducting a focus group was a challenge as the moderator had to make sure that all the participants had an equal opportunity to express their view points. As this study was specific to consumer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliances in Mumbai, India the results be would entirely be applicable to other parts of Mumbai, India. This study is based on present purchasing buying behaviour and may be subjected to change depending on the advancement in technology and the style of living.

## Chapter 4- Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings from the 2 focus groups that was conducted on June 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The researcher analysed the data from both the focus group discussion using thematic analysis and saw that there were reoccurring themes that arose throughout. In this chapter the researcher will discuss the themes. There were 6 themes which were relevant to objective one: experience, advertisements, retaining customers, price, perceived quality and customer satisfaction. One theme emerged from the discussion for objective two which was differential factors. The names of the participants for the first focus group are coded with # (participant number) and for second focus group \* (participant number).

### 4.2 Objective 1

To understand the factors that influences customer's perception on brand loyalty for home appliances.

All participants had different views about brand loyalty however, these views were not contradicting in nature but to some extent were connected to each other. While one participant from first focus group mentioned that brand loyalty is the willingness or ability to repurchase products from a particular brand depending on personal choice and the other mentioned brand loyalty was repurchasing of product from his preferred brand even though there were close alternative brands available. Majority of participants from second focus group felt brand loyalty is a sum of all factors which leads them to repurchase from the brand.

*#1: "Brand Loyalty to me is the willingness or the ability to stick to a desired brand depending on one's choice."*

*\*6: "Brand loyalty I think is the sum of all factors which get me back to a brand."*

*#2: "Brand loyalty would be repurchasing product from a brand even though there are alternatives for that product in the market."*

### 4.2.1 Experience

Experience was featured in a large amount in both the focus group discussion. It was noted that few participants gave more importance to personal experience with the brand and how it can influence brand loyalty. One participant from second focus group mentioned that she repurchased a product from a particular brand even though it was not very well-known in the market only because of her past experience.

*\*3: "I have been loyal to this brand called 'VU' for televisions which is not well quite known in the market. So when there was a whole shift in the customer trend from LCD to LED, I repurchased television from this brand because this brand gave me the quality which I expected at lower price and better after sales service."*

This participant further in her discussion stated that own experience plays an integral role in being loyal to a brand as any negative experience may lead a customer switch brands.

*\*3: "No marketing gimmick would influence my decision. My own experience would lead me to buy another brand only if the brand I am using provides me with a negative experience."*

Participants from first focus group too had common thoughts about experience. Moreover, participants in this group also felt that any negative experience with their preferred brand would make them switch to another brand.

*#2: "I think I would not switch brands because firstly I don't have the experience of that product and how it functions. These days, I think there are many brands in Indian market which offer you same quality products but I think experience matters for me. But yes, if I have a negative experience with my brand someday then I would switch to get my hands on to some other brand."*

*#1: "I think experience plays a significant role in terms of brand loyalty because if you buy a product from a brand and have positive experience about it so eventually you will end up being loyal to that brand. But one negative*

*experience that could be poor after sales service or quality will lead me to switch my brand. So for me brand loyalty relies on my personal experience.”*

#### **4.2.2 Advertisements**

This theme emerging from the discussion relates to how advertisement influences buying behaviour of a customer. Few participants felt that advertisements play an important role in the purchasing of household appliances as they are not bought at frequent intervals. One of them mentioned how direct and indirect advertisements influenced his decision to buy a product.

*#3: “Also, Yes! In terms of household appliances, sometimes advertisement play a major role because you do not buy the product frequently. So this medium keeps customer aware about company’s product and service and its existence in the market.”*

*\*5: “In terms of Television we had been using Sansui as a brand long time back. But our experience with this brand was not that good. So later when LCD televisions were introduced in the market we switched to another brand ‘Samsung’. The advertisement by this brand along with the positive feedback of my friends and family influenced my decision.”*

Another participant was too influenced by advertisements which led him to purchase from a particular brand. However, after a few years the product did not meet his expectations of what was perceived through the advertisements. From the discussion it could be noted that advertisements may lead to both positive and negative experience for a customer which may in turn influence buying behaviour.

*\*6: “Yes, advertising plays a huge role. As far as I remember the first or second television that we had bought was LG. During the World Cup at that time this brand was entertaining the Indian market. Based on this influential marketing strategy we got one. But as years passed by, I was not quite satisfied by this brand as it showcased itself during marketing. We switched to another brand. This is how strong marketing by LG influenced my decision.”*

### 4.2.3 Retaining customers

From the discussion it was noted that brand loyalty does not only revolve around the willingness of a customer to repurchase a brand but may also be viewed as efforts taken by companies to keep them loyal. Two participants discussed how loyalty schemes were used as a marketing tool to attract and retain customers.

*#3: "Company also tries the best to attract customers as they know that household appliances are not purchased on regular basis. So company are marketing their products and also at same time retaining customer. Example through loyalty program."*

*\*1: "With regards to loyalty now a day's brands in India have started loyalty programs wherein customers get points on their loyalty card whenever they purchase a product. These things can also be a driving factor in order to attract and retain customer to a brand."*

This participant further mentioned how buy back scheme given by certain companies play an important role not only in retaining them but by also is a way to keep them updated to the latest technology in the market.

*\*1: "Like I want to add on to what I said previously is that certain brands like Samsung or Sony give you an option of buy back in order to save your money. Well as I said that I am a tech savvy person and want to keep myself upgraded to technology, with this buy back option I am able to exchange and keep my self-upgraded rather than spend a huge amount on new one."*

An interesting insight was provided by a participant wherein he mentioned how online shopping websites are keeping track of customer and their preferences. This helps them to analyse the buying behaviour of a customer and also assists them in predicting any future needs.

*#2: "Just to state a fact that as we know that organization try to put in a lot of money equal to concept of predictive analysis wherein you try to maintain trends about persons shopping. For example, like a lot of people even in India are used to online shopping so what companies do is that they keep track of cookies and history of what you have bought in your past so if they know that*

*probably you tend to choose a lot many options from a certain brand that's when they know and they'll give you an option or predict something that you might probably need in your near future and give you of the certain that you are most likely to choose from. Also I think they know that people do prefer choosing it through brand wise. That's the reason on online shopping site there is categorization of products or goods that they sell so that people may choose brand first then go inside it."*

#### **4.2.4 Price**

In the discussion it was noted that a few participants to some extent were price conscious and this was well reflected when most of the participants mentioned that they would repurchase from a brand considering its price and whether it was economical when compared to other brands.

*\*5: "Brand loyalty for me is repurchasing of product from same brand maybe because brand is offering me product that is cost effective and at same time giving me guarantee that the product is good."*

Few participants had a different opinion and mentioned that they would purchase an expensive product from a brand only because of the products' feature and its maintenance cost after purchase. Here it could be noted that these participants were in agreement to pay a premium price even if there were other brands offering products at a much economical price.

*\*1: "Brand loyalty according to me is when you buy product again and again from same brand because of the service quality being good or maybe another factor such as price as said before. Like for example for household appliance such as television I would prefer to go with Sony even though it is expensive."*

*\*6: "People might do cost benefit analysis of how cheap the product is and how expensive it's going to be when maintaining the product. So they are willing to pay a premium for their after sales service."*

One of the participant mentioned that she would pay any amount required to buy products from her preferred brand only because she has been using products from this brand since 15 years and has had a positive experience with it. Moreover, this participant also mentioned that she would not switch to

another brand due to fear in her mind that another brand may not be as good as her preferred brand. Another participant agreed to this and claimed that she would too be willing to pay a premium for the brand she is loyal towards only because of the brand's quality.

#3- *“Considering washing machine from the past 15 years we have been using Godrej. Price has played an important role in my purchasing behaviour and also the after sales services. Even though the brand has lost its value in the market place. It's just a fear my family and I have to switch to another brand because we have been using this brand for many years and this is the reason I would be willing to pay any given price to purchase from Godrej.”*

\*4: *“I agree. The history of the brand, cost of the product and the quality should be considered. Even if the other brands have offers, the quality may not be as good as they show it. If the cost of the product that you have always been loyal is more than the other brand products, you will go for it because the history of the brand and quality will give you satisfaction.”*

#### **4.2.5 Perceived Quality**

With regards to quality, majority of the participants agreed that it played a significant role in the repurchase behaviour.

\*2- *“In my family for each category I would say we use Samsung as we trust that brand for its quality and durability”*

\*5- *“We buy these products after long intervals. So yes when we buy we look for products which are environment friendly and of good quality specially for washing machine and air conditioner.”*

#2- *“I agree to what has been said where you lay a lot of emphasis on the quality or the service given to you after you bought a particular product if that is quite good obviously it means that the brand is serious keeping its customers loyal, happy and satisfied”*

\*4- *“Experience with the brand, its service, its product, quality plays an important role in your next purchase”*

One participant said that she purchased her preferred brand for almost all categories of product because she is satisfied with the quality while other participant preferred using different brands for other product categories because of quality and after sales service.

*#4: "As I said before we prefer Samsung for almost everything like example we first got Television of Samsung and we were actually satisfied by the brand because of the quality. So for air conditioner and washing machine we again went for Samsung".*

*#1: "In terms of any kitchen appliance like toaster we preferred Murphy Richards as we feel it's the best brand in terms of quality and price. For Microwave we preferred Sharp because of its quality. Voltas for Air-conditioner. In terms of Washing machine, we prefer Whirlpool is what we prefer because of well-established brand in the market good after sales service."*

#### **4.2.6 Customer satisfaction**

The focus group discussion identified customer satisfaction as an integral aspect of brand loyalty. Participants mentioned that they would refrain to switch to another brand because their preferred brand provides them with satisfaction based on quality, service and reputation in the market. Satisfaction with a brand will lead customers to share their brand experiences with others.

*\*2:" I think for me factors like customer satisfaction and brand experience plays an important role because I think if a person knows the brand and have experience of its product that they are offering and is of good quality and reasonable price then he wouldn't switch to any other brand. Like I said I have Samsung for almost all home appliances that's because I am satisfied with its service, good quality products and also well reputed in the market."*

*FG 5- "For me customer satisfaction plays an important role because if I am satisfied with the brand's product its quality and service then I wouldn't t switch to any other brand."*

*#3 - "Yes, I agree! I think when it comes to brand loyalty it is important to consider customer satisfaction, experience and how comfortable you are with*

*the brand because if you are a loyal customer, you generally tend to market about that brand indirectly by sharing your experience with others.”*

*\*6: “I think customer satisfaction and experience would be important because for me that’s what makes you loyal to that brand like a good experience with its quality, service will obviously lead you to buy the product again.”*

### **4.3 Objective 2**

To understand customer’s preference for Indian versus International brands.

#### **4.3.1 Differential Factors:**

A prominent theme that emerged in this discussion relating to objective two was differential factors. It was noted that all the participants had different likings when considering Indian or International brand. Hence it could be noted that participants in the focus group has different opinions about Indian and international brands. One participant mentioned he preferred Indian brands because it was cheaper and offered better after sales than international brand.

*#2- “As I said before I have been using Onida for Television. During that time there were hardly any brand for television to choose from like in the Indian market there were few international brands but were not affordable. But my experience so far with Indian brand has been better because of quality and after sales service.”*

One participant agreed to this and mentioned how governments have introduced new schemes to make international brands cheaper.

*#1- “When it comes to Indian versus international brand I would go for Indian brands because international brands are expensive as said before. But it is interesting to see the Indian government is promoting foreign manufacturers to come with its programme ‘make in India’. So it is actually going to be beneficial for India as first foreign manufacturers use to export products making it expensive when purchased in India, but now with the new scheme the prices of these products could be economical as it would be made in India.”*

Other participant mentioned he used international brand because of technology which was far ahead than Indian brands.

*\*1:” From my opinion I think international brands are far ahead than Indian brands in terms of technology, service. If you see the current Indian market, International brands are making their way in and almost dominating it over Indian brands. I have not experienced any Indian brands till now. So probably I would prefer to go with international brands when it comes to home appliances.”*

Two participants claimed that quality given out by both the brands are almost same these days.

*#3- “I think the quality given by both the brand are same. Even the local companies are trying to imitate the product of larger brands these days so for me I think I would prefer using both brand but it depend on which category of product.”*

*\*6:” I think when it comes to home appliance I would prefer using both brands because now a day you will find almost same quality in both the brands to be honest. Talking about aftersales service, I think Indian brand is better because their service centres are very well established all over India. It depends that I wouldn't mind using both the brands.”*

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the findings that emerged from the two focus group discussion. It was clear from the findings of this study that participants were quite aware about brand loyalty. The findings pointed out that participants were influenced by various factors like experience, advertisements, loyalty schemes, perceived quality, price and customer satisfaction. When participants were asked about their preference for Indian versus international brand the findings revealed that some participants preferred Indian brand because of price and quality while others preferred international because of technology. The findings of this study will be compared with the literature review in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5- Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the key findings and will refer it back to the literature review to identify if these findings support the secondary research or disagree with them.

### **5.2 Customer's Perception on Brand Loyalty**

In order to understand the level of awareness amongst participants with regards to brand loyalty, an open ended question was asked in both the focus group which gave the researcher an insight of what the customers perceived brand loyalty as. Some participants described brand loyalty as the willingness or the ability to repurchase products from a particular brand while some others viewed brand loyalty as a sum of factors which attract them towards a particular brand. Comparing this to the definitions stated in the literature review it could be ascertained that the meaning of brand loyalty according to the participants in the focus group were in agreement to the literature review specifically to the definition stated by Oliver (1999) and Woods (2004).

As mentioned in the literature review by Otara (2011) customer perception is based on past experience and personal opinions. The participants from both the focus group presented their views on a similar ground that experience influenced their purchasing decision. In the discussion it was seen that, how positive experience with their preferred brand has helped them to stay loyal. It was also interesting to see that, both the focus group had similar opinions that any negative experience with their preferred brand will make them switch to other brand which supports the literature by Fowler and Bowler (2015) that negative experience in relation to a product or a service can influence purchasing decision.

According to Watson and Hill (2015) customer's perception about a brand is also influenced by advertisement, public relations and loyalty scheme. One participant supported this statement by mentioning that her perception about a brand to some extent relies on advertisements as advertisements were a platform through which she could gain information about the brand and the

products it sold in the marketplace (Samanta, 2014). Another participant mentioned that advertising not only has a positive influence on customer buying behaviour but also could have a negative impact. This was well explained when an advertisement acted as a driving factor for him to purchase a product but ultimately did not meet his expectations and led to a negative impact Rao (2007).

Apart from direct advertisements participants did mention that indirect advertisements influence their decision to buy household appliances. Participants in both the focus group mentioned that they usually take the recommendations of friends and family into consideration while purchasing a household appliance. This finding was similar to the study conducted by Khalid, Ahmed and Ahmad (2013) and Whitley (2014) wherein they mentioned customer perception is influenced by friends and family which is usually through word of mouth.

The focus group discussed about how companies are using marketing strategies to attract and retain loyal customers as household appliances are not bought frequently. Participants discussed that loyalty cards and buy back options in particular are popular methods executed by companies to attract and retain them. This was well stated in the study done by Kotler, Burton and Deans (2013) wherein the authors mentioned that it cost 5 times more to win a new customer than it does to keep an existing one. An interesting finding was that online companies are tracking preferences of customers as this would help them to market only those products which would be the best fit for that customer in near future.

The participants of both the focus groups agreed that price was a major aspect in their purchase decision which is reported in the literature of Cadogan and Foster (2000). It was noted from the discussion that few participants repurchased the products from the same brand because it was economical to them i.e. products at cheaper price but good quality whereas for others price was a status. They would buy the products because of its features or for its latest technology in the market. It was interesting to know that these participants were in agreement to pay a premium price even if the other brands

offered products at much economical rate which supports the study of Keller (2003) wherein the author mentions that loyal consumer tend to pay premium for their preferred brand and their purchase intentions are not easily affected by price. This finding also supports the study of Hasan (2015) wherein the author mentioned price was one of the influential factor when determining the attitude towards consumer durable goods.

According to the Recklies (2015), if customer has good perception about the quality of a product it increases satisfaction which was evident in this case. Few participants mentioned that they were loyal towards a same brand for almost all household appliances because of perceived quality. Whereas others preferred purchasing different brands for different household appliances because of quality and the other reason being that not all brands catered to all household appliances like for example one participant mentioned that 'Sony' catered to televisions and no other household appliances. However, this finding to an extent supports Srivastava R.K (2007) and Li, Wu and Wang (2000) that mentioned perceived quality was considered as the most important variable for consumers.

Customer satisfaction was another factor emerging from the discussion. Participants mentioned that satisfaction with product's quality and service will lead them to repurchase the product again which is reported by Ha and John (2010) in their study. It was also evident in the discussion that brand loyal customers tend to market the brand indirectly through word of mouth by sharing their brand experience with other which supports the statement made by Dick and Basu (1994).

### **5.3 Customer's Preference for Indian versus International Brands**

In order to complete the second objective, participants were asked about their opinion for Indian versus International brands. The purpose of this question was to know which factors influence their purchase decision in relation to international or Indian brands. It could be noted that all participants had different views upon this.

It is evident that the Indian durable market is a host to both Indian brands as well as the international brand. One the participant highlighted that in the early

years an Indian customer did not have much choices to make as only the Indian brands dominated the durable market (Shailesh and Mishra, 2015). But over time due to factors such as relaxed government policies, trade regulations and opportunities for foreign brands to enter the Indian market which created fierce competition between international and Indian brands.

Considering the view of the participants, it was noted that there were mix responses. Some of the participants preferred using Indian brands because of its price and after-sales service. However, one of the participant appreciated the international brand because of their technology and mentioned this was one of the driving forces for him to purchase an international brand over an Indian brand. In the discussion, participants felt that international brands are expensive as compared to the Indian brands. Furthermore, one participant discussed how Indian government is promoting a scheme called 'make in India' which allows foreign manufacturers to make their products in India. This would be economical for customers to buy international brand.

Some participants mentioned that they would use both the brands because in Indian home appliance market there are many brands under one roof that it is hard to differentiate the qualities of both the brands which supports the statement of Thompson (2012) that local companies are offering same qualities and features like those of larger brand and Chattopadhyay (2012) that the Indian brands are at par with the international brand on the basis of technology, performance and quality. However, the above result contradicts to the statement made by Aaker (1992) that quality of brand helps customer to differentiate brands. From this discussion it can be concluded that, customer's perception varied from one person to another with regards to Indian versus international brand.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

When analysing the data, the researcher identified few limitations which would have an effect on the overall result. The first most important limitation of this study was sample size as some could not make it on the day of focus group. This research consisted of only two focus groups with 10 participants. For the results to be accurate, larger sample would have led to a much detailed insight

into customer's perception on brand loyalty towards household appliances. But because of time constraint this was not possible. Also participants could have wrongly interpreted the questions that were asked by the moderator which could have affected the result of the research.

## **Chapter 6- Conclusion and Future Research**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will conclude the study and will give future research possibilities into the topic of brand loyalty for household appliances.

### **6.2 Conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to investigate customer's perception on brand loyalty for household appliance in Mumbai, India. It commenced with an analysis of literature and past research papers. The literature was divided into different headings, these being customer perception, brand loyalty, factors affecting brand loyalty, home appliance market in India, brand loyalty and home appliances. The researcher felt exploring these chosen topics will help in better understanding of existing thoughts of academics in this field. In order to achieve the overall aim of the study, 2 objectives were established firstly to know the different factors that influence customer's perception on brand loyalty for home appliance market in Mumbai, India and secondly to know customer preference with regards to Indian versus International brands. In order to accomplish the set objectives, data was collected using two focus groups.

The data revealed that participants gave significant importance to brand loyalty in consumer durable goods market. The findings and results of this paper were supporting the literature and previous research presented in this study. The themes found in this study were in agreement with the literature review. Moreover, from this research, researcher also understood preference of Indian consumer in relation to Indian versus International brands.

The findings of this study supports the literature as participants involved in this research stated that positive experience played a vital role in their repurchasing behaviour. Participants also strongly felt that negative experience with their preferred brand will lead them to switch to another brand. From the further discussion it was also evident that, advertisements were another influential factor. Some participants mentioned how positive advertisement influenced their decision and with this marketing tool, they are able to gain knowledge about the brand. As mentioned by Rao (2007) that

sometimes overpromising advertisement by companies can increase customer's expectation and if these expectations are not met then it will lead to dissatisfaction among consumer which was evident in this research findings. Participants expected the product to be similar as seen through advertisement but when they experienced it, the expectations were not fulfilled which made them to switch to alternate product. Brand loyal customers usually market the products for the company indirectly through word of mouth communication. From this research, majority of participants were influenced by family or friends. The findings of the research also pointed out loyalty schemes as influential factor used by companies to attract and retain customers. Some participants mentioned loyalty programme and buy back option scheme as some of the ways to stay loyal towards the company.

The findings of this research pointed out price, perceived quality and customer satisfaction as other influential factors for brand loyalty towards home appliances. Participants mentioned perceived quality also plays a vital role in repurchase behaviour. Some participants indicated that they used same brand for all the product categories while some others used different brands because of quality of product. This finding supported the past research study of Srivastava R.K (2007). As said by Cadogen and Foster (2000), price is the most important consideration for the average consumer, this was evident in this research as few participants were price conscious. Some participants purchased expensive products and agreed to pay premium for their brand because of quality or after sales (Keller, 2003; Gounaris and Stathakopoulos, 2004). Customer satisfaction was the last factor emerging from the discussion. Participants mentioned that customer satisfaction with brand leads to repurchase of product again.

In terms of the second objective, it could be said that both the Indian and international brands are competing fiercely with each other. Some participants supported the Indian brands on the basis of the price and aftersales service whereas other few supported the international brand on the basis of their technology. An interesting insight was that a few participants felt it difficult to differentiate between both these brands due to similarity in quality.

The overall findings of this study, supports majority of the literature review. As per the focus group discussion it could be concluded that the participants were loyal to their preferred brands. Customer perception in regards to brand loyalty for the participants differed on the basis of their own experience, customer satisfaction, price, perceived quality or through advertisements and loyalty schemes.

## **6.2 Future Research Possibilities**

Firstly, current study has small sample size in order to determine the findings. The researcher could only work on 10 respondents, which has limited the accuracy of research due to time constraint. Researcher recommends to have a future study on a larger sample size to get more in-depth knowledge about customer's perception.

Secondly, this research uses qualitative analysis because the researcher lacked knowledge of using SPSS. Future studies using quantitative analysis can be adopted wherein the researcher can investigate the relationships of each factors with brand loyalty.

Lastly, this research was done in the city of Mumbai, India with selected categories of home appliances. Future research could include other regions of India and focusing on one product category or more.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### Focus Group 1-Transcript

##### **Moderator: “How familiar are you with the concept of brand loyalty?”**

#1: Brand Loyalty to me is the willingness or the ability to stick to a desired brand depending on ones' choice or influences related to media or influenced by friends or peer pressure.

#2: I am aware of the concept of brand loyalty but not quite sure how much an individual relies on the concept of brand loyalty while going ahead with buying a certain thing or a good. But for me brand loyalty would be repurchasing product from a brand even though there are alternatives for that product in the market.

#3: For me I think Brand loyalty is something that attracts customer to buy it again. So it could be like experience or it could be just name of the brand which may be well known in the market.

#4: I feel brand loyalty comes after certain time. For example, if I have a Television of some brand and I am satisfied with that brand, so next time I buy that same brand that means I am actually loyal to that brand.

#2: I guess brand loyalty plays an important or significance role in the type of merchandise that it sells. For like a brand might actually have a lot many things that goes on selling off but it might be associated majorly with a sector its good at. For example, If I have to consider “Mango”-a clothing outlet which does have both section -Men and Women. But as far as I have always heard of is that the women section clothing line is better than men section. So Women might consider “Mango” as a loyal brand when you go to buy clothes but at same time men may not.

#1: Absolutely agree to it. I'll add to it that it's not the question of sector but the product. So something like a pair of jeans. I have a particular size, variety or place that I buy from so I go pick up my brand and come back. But for household appliances it's a different case. There is always a concept of how further technology has gotten. So you want to bring yourself up to what's going

around in the current market and also for household it takes time to buy any item. So I don't know whether brand loyalty plays an important role in Household appliances.

#3: I think it's not only that but Company also tries the best to attract customers as they know that household appliances are not purchased on regular basis. So company are marketing their products and also at same time retaining customer. Example through loyalty program.

#4: I think brand loyalty also comes from age factor like younger people might be interested in something else while older people might be interested in something else.

#1: I agree to that actually.

#2: Yes! In terms of household appliances, you don't buy that frequently but other regular stuff that you buy brand loyalty plays an important role in terms of the way the product is given out in the market or publicized for the matter. The marketing department definitely would lay emphasis on keeping its customer loyal into buying it and thereby provide more opportunities and offers or discounts.

#1: I think it is also important to consider the services it provides after you have purchased it. So if something is wrong with the product the way the company handles that complaint can play a major role to retain the customers.

#3: Yes! I recently purchased a washing machine and in Mumbai the after sales services is really good even like after 3 years if there is a problem with the machine the company is always there to give you a service.

#1: I think it's also about how much you buy. For example, if I am buying washing machine and refrigerator so that makes me more valuable customer than someone buying an expensive refrigerator

#2: Just to state a fact that as we know that organization try to put in a lot of money equal to concept of predictive analysis wherein you try to maintain trends about persons shopping. For example, like a lot of people even in India are used to online shopping so what companies do is that they keep track of

cookies and history of what you have bought in your past so if they know that probably you tend to choose a lot many options from a certain brand that's when they know and they'll give you an option or predict something that you might probably need in your near future and give you of the certain that you are most likely to choose from. Also I think they know that people do prefer choosing it through brand wise. That's the reason on online shopping site there is categorization of products or goods that they sell so that people may chose brand first than go inside it.

**Moderator: “To Which brands do you display loyalty towards? Is there any recommendation of the product given by your family or friends? So for the category of television”**

#2: So how it goes at my place is that when you have to buy new appliance you generally tend to ask everyone for their input. The television that I own is from” Onida”. Frankly speaking this company was a big boon in the market at that particular time. We got our television approximately 10 years back and at that point of time there were only few companies to buy television like Onida itself, Videocon and so forth. But Onida is something that gave after service better than other company or brands available. But as of now in the market this brand is not pretty good in terms of television when there are other brands like Sony, Panasonic because now there are pretty much more good brands to choose from which was not there during that time.

#4: I think at my place we are more loyal towards Samsung for almost all appliances. And specifically television because of price range which Samsung offers is quite lower that other brands and also quite ahead in terms of technology which is not very complex in terms of using it.

#3: Referring to what has been said for me before buying any household appliances we need to look at what the family wants. I also prefer to go with Samsung because of its wide range of products with different price range and even offers or discounts for lot of customer. Even their technology is up to date and what people want.

#1: We brought Videocon Television and when buying that brand, we looked at various factors like price competitiveness and also during that time it was

mandatory by government to have set up box installed in every house. Generally, you require different remote for Television and set up box. So Videocon gave an option of considering both into one which turned out to be convenient.

**Moderator: “So what about other categories of product”**

#4: As I said before we prefer Samsung for almost everything like example we first got Television of Samsung and we were actually satisfied by the brand because of the quality. So for air conditioner and washing machine we again went for Samsung. But for microwave it's like something different from these other household appliances. We preferred Electrolux because its function was much more convenient and during that time, Samsung did not offer much products in terms of microwave.

#1: In terms of any kitchen appliance like toaster we preferred Murphy Richards as we feel it's the best brand in terms of quality and price. For Microwave we preferred Sharp because of its quality. Voltas for Air-conditioner. In terms of Washing machine, we prefer Whirlpool is what we prefer because of well-established brand in the market good after sales service.

#3- Well we have all different brands. Considering washing machine from the past 15 years we have been using Godrej. Price have played an important role in my purchasing behaviour and also the after sales services. Even though the brand has lost its value in the market place. It's just a fear my family and I have to switch to another brand because we have been using this brand for many years and this is the reason I would be willing to pay any given price to purchase from Godrej

#2- Talking about my place, as someone said before for kitchen appliances murphy Richards is the best and so do I prefer that. Also this brand is quite famous in the market and cost is quite reasonable along with service. Talking about washing machine at my place or as far as I know a lot many people are who stay near my place or have been known to us have been using whirlpool as a brand because of an affordable price as well as its compact size. So when I talk about A/C the brand that goes hand in hand is Voltas not because it is

backed up by TATA but because the brand has stayed true to its promises on terms of energy consumption, durability and so forth.

**Moderator: “How often do you buy these brands?”**

#2 – Well considering the fact that these are appliances when you buy for the first time you agree to spend a lot of amount provided that it is durable for a longer period of time because it is something you would not want to change firstly because they are expensive and secondly because these are something which you require them to be heavy duty in case you have to buy a washing machine every two years it means that that either there is something wrong of you choosing that washing machine or else the brand the not staying true to the specifications of the requirement of the particular goods.

#3 – I buy household appliances only when it stops working. I am not a technology fan so I would not look forward to new technologies for a particular household appliance so yes for me it is like when previous appliance gets spoilt I buy a new one.

#4 – We do not often buy microwave, air-condition, washing machine as compared to television because we buy television after every three years.

#1 – well for me it is combination of things, if there are products with new technology advancements and if it has value for money so I would prefer to change it.

**Moderator: “What influences you to buy those brands that you are loyal to?”**

#4 – I think it is the service provided by the brand that keeps associated to the brand

#2 – I agree to what has been said where you lay a lot of emphasis on the quality or the service given to you after you bought a particular product if that is quite good obviously it means that the brand is serious keeping its customers loyal, happy and satisfied. The second thing what influences me to be loyal to a brand is that for some reason a particular brand is always associated with kind of the service or quality it would provide. There is certain

brand that you would associate that could give you higher quality product than the rest in the market. So for me the type of service and customer satisfaction that has been given by a brand and the thing that I perceive about a particular brand will be of a better quality than the rest is the driving forces for me to select the brand

#3 - Yes, I agree! I think when it comes to brand loyalty it is important to consider customer satisfaction, experience and how comfortable you are with the brand because if you are a loyal customer, you generally tend to market about that brand indirectly by sharing your experience with others

#1 – I think experience plays a significant role in terms of brand loyalty because if you buy a product from a brand and have positive experience about it so eventually you will end up being loyal to that brand. But one negative experience that could be poor after sales service or quality will lead me to switch my brand. So for me brand loyalty relies on my personal experience.

#3-Also, Yes! In terms of household appliances, sometimes advertisement play a major role because you do not buy the product frequently. So this medium keeps customer aware about company's product and service and its existence in the market.

**Moderator: "What aspect of the brand appeals to you and inspires loyalty?"**

#4-I think price is the first aspect which drives to buy a certain thing and secondly the promotion for the brand if the promotion is good and if it meets our budget.

#2 – I think for me like it has been said over here price does play an important role, the next thing that I would concentrate is place. You have these certain chain of shops that keep a product only if it is found to be good and also certain quality if for the fact that I go to these chain outlets to buy a product. It is a pre conceived notion that yes they would be verified and made sure that the quality of the particular product they are selling it is good. However, in contradictory to one of the things wherein promotion now it is my personal opinion is that if a particular brand is good, well in the market and has a good reputation it does

not need to promote its product a lot more than that of other brands but somewhere down the line if they have been at default that's when promotion okays a major role because that is when you try to create back a goodwill in the market.

#1 – well my personal opinion I would probably look at the place I am buying from. All in the family are E zone loyalist. It is a one stop shop for all household and other appliances in the world. It is a place where we go to for everything and anything. For another reason if any of the products you call just one place and u get the services that are necessary ever it is from a different brand. And I think over last few years we have built a kind or rapport with the customer service people they know u by name and the work is just done. For me that is more important as I am a working professional and only contribute to so much time to get something done and if the service being provided for the work to be done so I am willing to go that extra mile

#3 – I completely agree to what has been said. I am a loyal member of e zone and I would go there to pick up any household appliance. Price does play an important role because under one roof there are so many brand promoting their products do it does become difficult for new owners to buy a particular household appliance because companies are marketing their products looking at how well the companies are doing so I think price does play an important role in me purchasing brand.

Moderator: “Would you switch brands that you are loyal to if the alternative brand was cheaper, had more popular image in the market and has the same quality of your preferred brand?”

#1 – I think it would be unlikely because, frankly It comes down to your own comfort level as well with a certain brand that you have been using from a very long time and when it comes to household appliance you would prefer that kind of comfort so it is unlikely unless it is tremendous difference in price, probably would not go in for it

#4 – I agree that price does matter but when it comes to home appliances the brand loyalty is more significant than price.

#2 – I think I would not switch brands because firstly I don't have the experience of that product and how it functions. These days, I think there are many brands in Indian market which offer you same quality products but I think experience matters for me. But yes, if I have a negative experience with my brand someday then I would switch to get my hands on to some other brand.

#3 -Like I did mention that I have been using Godrej since the past 15 years and even if there is another washing machine company, I think it is just the fear in my mind that it cannot be as good as Godrej but in terms on an air conditioner there is a trend of having split air conditioner so the whole transition from having a window ac to a split ac also cost you money so it is not only the price of the product but also the installation charges that I would consider before switching to another brand

**Moderator: “So what are your opinion about Indian versus International brands?”**

#2 – As I said before I have been using Onida for Television. During that time there were hardly any brand for television to choose from like in the Indian market there were few international brands but were not affordable. But my experience so far with Indian brand has been better because of quality and after sales service.”

#1 – When it comes too Indian versus international brand I would go for Indian brands because international brands are expensive as said before. But it is interesting to see the Indian government is promoting foreign manufacturers to come with its programme 'make in India'. So it is actually going to be beneficial for India as first foreign manufacturers use to export products making it expensive when purchased in India, but now with the new scheme the prices of these products could be economical as it would be made in India.

#4 – I agree as the technology is growing in India and lot many brands have been introduced both Indian and international but when it comes to home appliances, three factor people consider is price, promotion and service. With international brand, I feel service lacks a little in cities which makes us purchase Indian brand

#3- I think the quality given by both the brand are same. Even the local companies are trying to imitate the product of larger brands these days so for me I think I would prefer using both brand but it depend on which category of product

**Moderator: “Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic that we have discussed?”**

#3 – I think brand loyalty is an effort from both the company and the customer. And if the company is trying to do things to keep my loyal I think I would stick to the company and the price does play an important role and how happy am I with the product.

#4 – I think my family is loyal to brands when it comes to home appliance as we do not want actually experiment with new brands. but if in future we find a good difference between the price and the same quality given by a preferred brand along with better promotion than we might choose that brand.

#1- India is very competitive market for any brand to function in so price and service are the two most important thing that would make or break a brand in India more than promotion as people are likely to come back if product is in budget and last for a long time.

## **Appendix B**

### **Focus Group 2-Transcript**

#### **Moderator: “How familiar are you with the concept of Brand loyalty?”**

\*3: For me Brand loyalty is when I buy product again and again which can be due to several factors such as price or brand name itself.

\*6: Brand loyalty I think is the sum of all factors which get me back to a brand that can be like energy efficiency, price, quality of service and so forth.

\*5: Brand loyalty for me is repurchasing of product from same brand maybe because brand is offering me product that is cost effective and at same time giving me guarantee that the product is good.

\*1: Brand loyalty according to me is when you buy product again and again from same brand because of the service quality being good or maybe another factor such as price as said before. Like for example for household appliance such as television I would prefer to go with Sony because of its features that offers even though it is expensive.

\*2: I would say that majority of people in India are brand loyal customers like for example being a brand loyal customer makes them to know the brand firstly and the product quality as well as service. They wouldn't mind if the product is expensive because they know the brand.

\*5: Yes! That's the concept in India and also if the brand is advertising itself in the market in a very good way then people are willing to pay anything for its products.

\*6: I agree to that! People are not just paying for the product but also paying for their peace of mind once they get the product home.

\*4: I agree to that! There is also an emotional attachment as a factor for example if you buy a product which would be your first product from that brand and if you are comfortable with its service, quality and cost, you wouldn't want to change to another brand.

\*3: I wouldn't agree to that fact that people buy expensive product because I think India as a country has a population of different income categories. So I

think people would not pay so much for a product if their earnings are not quite well.

\*2: Then I don't think those people are brand loyal.

\*3: I think they are brand loyal for other product because in India there are brands which give you same product at cheaper price so might be they are loyal to that.

\*6: People might do cost benefit analysis of how cheap the product is and how expensive it's going to be when maintaining the product. So they are willing to pay a premium for their after sales service. That's what I think they meant to say expensive product.

\*1: With regards to loyalty now a day's brands in India have started loyalty programs wherein customers get points on their loyalty card whenever they purchase a product. These things can also be a driving factor in order to attract and retain customer to a brand.

\*4: I recently bought a microwave and yes when we go back to buying home appliances which have a long life we prefer to look in the same brand that we purchased earlier.

**Moderator: "To Which brands do you display loyalty towards? Is there any recommendation of the product given by your family or friends? So for the category of television"**

\*5: In terms of Television we had been using Sansui as a brand long time back. But our experience with this brand was not that good. So later when LCD televisions were introduced in the market we switched to another brand 'Samsung'. The advertisement by this brand along with the positive feedback of my friends and family influenced my decision.

\*1: For me my family have influenced me. I also think experience of others matter but not as much. There was one situation which I would like to share. I had been using Sony for televisions. When the trend came for LED televisions my friend gave me recommendation from his own experience to buy Onida because of its quality and cheaper price than Sony. So when I switched my

brand to Onida, I was not satisfied because I thought it was not good as I expected it to be. So after a year or so I switched back to my brand.

\*4: Yes, I agree with the point being said over here. For almost all household appliance I have involved my family into the buying decisions. In the category of television, Samsung offers wide range of product and also caters to economical society. In my view, I would go for Sony because I have used both the brands Sony as well as Samsung and what I feel is that Sony might be on the expensive side but it provides you with good quality and the comfort level which is much better than Samsung. Also to add to this point is that other brands like Samsung and LG market their products through advertisement which Sony does not. For me to have your own experience with the brand is important.

\*1: Yes, I agree to it. Like Samsung market their products through advertisement which can be an influential factor.

\*6: Yes, advertising plays a huge role. As far as I remember the first or second television that we had bought was LG. During the World Cup at that time this brand was entertaining the Indian market. Based on this influential marketing strategy we got one. But as years passed by, I was not quite satisfied by this brand as it showcased itself during marketing. We switched to another brand. This is how strong marketing by LG influenced my decision.

\*2: Yes, marketing does play an important role but for me I would consider asking my family or friends who using the same brand because it would satisfy me and products like home appliance are expensive as well. So you wouldn't appreciate when you pay more and not satisfied with the product.

\*3: I have been loyal to this brand called 'VU' for televisions which is not well quite known in the market. So when there was a whole shift in the customer trend from LCD to LED, I repurchased television from this brand because this brand gave me the quality which I expected at lower price and better after sales service.

**Moderator: "So what about other categories of product"**

\*2: In my family for each category I would say we use Samsung as we trust that brand for its quality and durability.

\*1: For Washing machine we use Samsung but for microwave and Air conditioner we have been using Hitachi because firstly I think Sony does not cater to such appliances. Secondly for these categories I look for factors like efficiency as well as durability.

\*5: We buy these products after long intervals. So yes when we buy we look for products which are environment friendly and of good quality specially for washing machine and air conditioner. So for washing machine we use LG because I think gives wide range of eco-friendly products and for air conditioner we have been using Godrej because it is cost efficient as well as environment friendly. Also this brand has good reputation in the market for its product.

\*6: I agree to it. When you compare these categories with television it's quite different like television wont contribute much towards your electricity bill as these appliances like your washing machine or air conditioner will do. So I would mainly look for products which are energy efficient and also in the Indian market you will find different brand which will provide you with this option like Voltas, Bluestar and so forth.

\*4: I think for different product categories people prefer to use different brands because I think that for years and years now people know that this brand is better in this product category and so on. And also mentioned before that Sony does not cater to other products that could be one of the reason for them to switch to other brand in other product categories. Also in these categories most of the people do look for environment friendly options which companies like LG, Videocon offer you.

\*3: I would prefer different brands for different household appliances. For microwave I would go with Murphy Richards, washing machine with Whirlpool and air conditioner with LG. The reason to choose these brands over others was I think like mentioned before is energy efficient and cost effective.

**Moderator: "How often do you buy these brands?"**

\*1: Well I am a Tech savvy person and would love to purchase anything which is new in the market like for example when Sony had launched its 3D Led television with advanced technology of using Internet on it I was very much enthusiastic about it as I wanted to keep myself upgraded to it. So like in a year's time I had got one.

\*4: Yes, if you are a gadget freak and you would like to keep yourself updated to the technology you end up buying gadgets like television in short intervals. Like in my case I would purchase a new television until the previous one has been damaged completely. But for other product categories like air conditioner or washing machine I would purchase a new one when I come to know that the maintenance cost is more than your purchase.

\*3: I think I would buy a product only after the previous one has stopped working or is not worth repairing it. Like I wouldn't buy it after every year because these are durable goods and they last for almost 3-5 years.

\*2: Yes, I agree to it. I am also a gadget freak but I don't think I would spend a lot on such household appliances to keep myself upgraded.

\*5: Yes, for me I think resell value matters sometime. For example, like I have Samsung Television and its working in good condition even after 2 years and I have a resell value for it in the market. I would probably exchange to the latest technology that Samsung is offering.

\*6: At my place we would purchase a new television after every 4-5 years and for other product categories I think only after they stop working completely. In terms of technology I think people who are tech savvy or gadget freak may not be brand loyal also sometime because they might want to have their hands on to technology of other brands.

\*1: Like I want to add on to what I said previously is that certain brands like Samsung or Sony give you an option of buy back in order to save your money. Well as I said that I am a tech savvy person and want to keep myself upgraded to technology, with this buy back option I am able to exchange and keep myself self-upgraded rather than spend a huge amount on new one.

**Moderator: “What influences you to buy those brands that you are loyal to?”**

\*2: I think for me factors like customer satisfaction and brand experience plays an important role because I think if a person knows the brand and have experience of its product that they are offering and is of good quality and reasonable price then he wouldn't switch to any other brand. Like I said I have Samsung for almost all home appliances that's because I am satisfied with its service, good quality products and also well reputed in the market.

\*5: Like I said before that for me advertising does influence my decision of buying from a particular brand but for me customer satisfaction plays an important role because if I am satisfied with the brand's product its quality and service then I wouldn't t switch to any other brand.

\*4: Experience with the brand, its service, its product, quality plays an important role in you next purchase because if you are satisfied with these factors then you would obviously choose the same brand and stay loyal to it. Also brand awareness should be considered in the picture like how well the brand is in the market and how many people use it, what product categories is it good at, loyalty programs offered by brand so forth. Considering these aspects would eventually give you satisfaction by the end of the day.

\*1: For me my experience and customer service plays an important role as I am a working professional. For example: I use washing machine frequently and even if it stops working for a day it causes a lot of problem. This is where customer service plays an important role for me like how fast the service is attended and resolved. If your customer service is positive, then I think the experience too will be.

\*6: For me one of the major influential factor is customer experience whether it is mine or someone else's. Whenever we go to somebody's house we notice and ask for their feedback about the brand and if they find it good then I might be relying on someone else's experience as well but then it takes back to me like is the after sales service or operations of that brand good enough then my preferred brand. So it's kind of doing cost benefit analysis of both brands taking

into consideration experience and service. So yes according to me customer experience plays an important role.

\*3: For me experience plays a major role. I think one negative experience would lead me not to buy the product from that particular brand so for me experience ranks first.

**What aspect of the brand appeals to you and inspires loyalty?**

\*3: For me the aspect of the brand that appeals to me is the price and what the brand is doing to keep me as a loyal customer. If you display loyalty towards a brand you obviously expect something out of them as well like some sort of promotions and offers. In Mumbai you have different brands under one roof and each of them market in a similar way. So I think price and promotion of the brand plays an important role.

\*2: I agree to that. I think it is important for a company to market their products wisely in a competitive market like India. Along with that I think different aspects such as promotion by the brand along with price also plays a major role.

\*1: Price and how well the brand is established in the market are the two aspects I would consider.

\*4: I agree. The history of the brand, cost of the product and the quality should be considered. Even if the other brands have offers, the quality may not be as good as they show it. If the cost of the product that you have always been loyal is more than the other brand products, you will go for it because the history of the brand and quality will give you satisfaction.

\*5: In India there are different level of income earners and I think price of the product matters a lot. Also with that products which are eco-friendly certified also plays important role because now it is a growing concern everywhere.

\*6: For me I think the brand reputation could be a driving factors. Like how long it has been in the market, the level of service it offers and so on. Also I would take into consideration the price that it offers whether it fits mu budget.

Moderator: "Would you switch brands that you are loyal to if the alternative brand was cheaper, had more popular image in the market and has the same quality of your preferred brand?"

\*1: In Indian market there are many brands as mentioned and people get carried away sometime if the products are on promotion or offers. As per my experience I had switched brands. But the satisfaction which my preferred brand offered was not same as compared to the other. Although the brand has good image, but is also important to consider whether this brand is doing good enough in that category of product that you are looking for.

\*5: Yes, I think brand gives you mental satisfaction and as previously said it is important to consider how well it is reputed in the market. I would not switch to another brand because I would not be mentally satisfied even though it has same quality.

\*2: No I don't think I would switch to alternate brand even though it has good image or good quality because eventually that would not make me loyal to my brand.

\*4: I would not switch to the alternate brand because I know what my brand offers like good quality and service and I am emotionally attached somewhere down the line. Even if the alternate brand has good image and quality, you don't know the after sales service that it may offer whether is it good or bad.

\*3: No marketing gimmick would influence my decision. My own experience would lead me to buy another brand only if the brand I am using provides me with a negative experience.

\*6: I agree. I wouldn't switch brands even though it had more popular image or is cheaper than my preferred brand. Talking about same quality offering why would I in the speculation of a new brand which has the perceived quality but I might not be sure until I break it and experience it myself. So when I am bringing the new brand in, I am also a lot of speculation that this product might stop working in a year's time or might not be just as good as my preferred brand.

**Moderator: “So what are your opinion about Indian versus International brands?”**

\*5: I think both international as well as Indian brands has popular reputation like somebody mentioned that Godrej the Indian brand has been there since long time in Indian market and has a good reputation for its product specially washing machine and likewise for air conditioner I would prefer international brand because I have experience of it. But yes depends on the product that you are buying.

\*1: From my opinion I think international brands are far ahead than Indian brands in terms of technology, service. If you see the current Indian market, International brands are making their way in and almost dominating it over Indian brands. I have not experienced any Indian brands till now. So probably I would prefer to go with international brands when it comes to home appliances.

\*3: For me I don't really think I can distinguish whether International brand is better than Indian brand. Lately I have been using international brand. So I think to my knowledge, Indian brands are trying to keep up with the market and also trying their best to be a tough competitor for international brands. But as of now I would go with International brands.

\*4: Yes, I agree. It depends on personal experience with the brand. Like I have experienced international brand and I think the technology is far ahead than international brand. People who have experience using Indian brand might prefer that over international brand. It totally depends on experience.

\*6: I think when it comes to home appliance I would prefer using both brands because now a day you will find almost same quality in both the brands to be honest. Talking about aftersales service, I think Indian brand is better because their service centres are very well established all over India. It depends that I wouldn't mind using both the brands.

**Moderator: “Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic that we have discussed?”**

\*3: I think brand loyalty for me is like very subjective. So in my opinion after all the discussion I think brand loyalty depends on experience and how satisfied you are with the brand and that would lead you to buy the product again.

\*4: Yes, I agree! I think when it comes to brand loyalty it is important to consider experience, customer satisfaction and how comfortable you are with the brand.

\*6: I think customer satisfaction and experience would be important because for me that's what makes you loyal to that brand like a good experience with its quality, service will obviously lead you to buy the product again.