

A comparative study of Brand Loyalty on selected consumer durables**Dr Rajendraprasad K Hanagandi****KLE society's, IMSR BVB campus Vidyanagar****Abstract**

Brand loyalty is always vital for the marketers. The firm must comprehend what the customers feel about their brands. Customer preference for products depends upon how strong is the brand in the market, what is the image of the brand. A good brand indication is about the degree to which customer likes the brand, prefer it repeatedly, be satisfied and also advocate it, this study focuses on these parameters. The customer survey has been done on selected companies and consumer durables. It is found in the study that consumers have more affinity towards foreign brands. However the Indian brands are also in good competition and can compete with foreign companies if managed meticulously.

Key words: Brand Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Durables, Brand Esteem, Brand Satisfaction.

Introduction

Brand loyalty remains a topic of vigorous inquiry by marketers. Brand loyalty is an important matter to get right market. In the current scenario of brand explosion, product uniformity, innovation in consumer technology and connectivity and a mystifying array of media formats and customer communication has led to huge consumer brand awareness and also confusions. Customers are in ambiguous condition when it comes to selecting the brands.

So, Consumers have a preference to trust foremost famous brand names. These esteemed brand names and their images will be a magnet for consumers to purchase the brand and bring about repeat purchasing behavior. This is important for brands, which have only minor physical differences and consumed in a social setting where the brand can create a visible image about the consumers.

Brand name is important for the firm to attract customers to purchase the product and influence repeat purchasing behavior. Consumers tend to perceive the products from an overall perspective, associating with the brand name all the attributes and satisfaction experienced by the purchase and use of the

product. The brands which attract loyalty not only show repeat behavior but also get the benefit of brand recommendation. These are the customers who are highly satisfied with the brand.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty describes the tendency of a customer to choose one business or product over another for a particular need. Customers may be described as being "brand loyal" because they tend to choose a certain brand more often than others. Customer loyalty becomes evident when choices are made and actions taken by customers. Customers may express high satisfaction levels with a company in a survey, but satisfaction does not equal loyalty. Loyalty is demonstrated by the actions of the customer; customers can be very satisfied and still not be loyal.

Customer loyalty is all about attracting the right customer, getting them to buy, buy often, buy in higher quantities and bring additional customers. The companies must understand how customers make decisions for specific brands, what are the motivators for brand preference and loyalty. The firms must make gigantic efforts to retain the existing customers and also equal efforts must be made in getting consumers and make them continually buy. It's easier to gain loyalty from a current customer than it is to gain a new customer. Customers carry a great deal of value when they are loyal to a firm and they are the ultimate brand ambassadors.

Loyal customers don't leave even for an attractive offer elsewhere. Maintaining loyal customers is an integral part of any business. Customer loyalty is the result of well-managed customer retention programs; customers who are targeted by a retention program demonstrate higher loyalty to a business. All customer retention programs rely on communicating with customers, giving them encouragement to remain active and choosing to do business with a company.

Proactive contact with current customers is a good way to build the loyalty. The more the customer sees someone from a firm, the more likely that company will get the next order. Building customer loyalty will be a lot easier if the firm. It is especially important for the firms to retain those employees who interact with customers such as sales people, technical support and customer-service people. Many companies give a lot of attention to retaining sales people but little to support people. Loyal employees can provide excellent customer service.

Peter Drucker said “The purpose of a business is to attract and retain a customer”. Companies like Videocon and Onida are having quite good quality of products and also they are competitively priced. The market statistics indicated that the foreign companies like LG, Samsung and Sony are performing much better in many markets. The Indian major players like Onida and Videocon are not able to capture much market.

The market statistics indicate that the foreign companies like LG, Samsung and Sony are performing much better in many markets. The Indian major players like Onida & Videocon are not able to capture much market. In the game of value and volumes, the Korean consumer electronics major LG seems to be the clear winner in the Indian market for CTV's, as per the ORG-GFK estimates. The Korean player with a market share of 18.6 per cent is the number one followed by fellow Korean Samsung with a market share of 16 per cent. LG has been a market leader in the washing machine segment also with a market share of 34 percent as per ORG data.

This will be the problem area of the research; the studies will be dedicated on issues concerned to brand loyalty. In depth analysis on parameters of brand loyalty will be studied.

Objectives of the study

- a) To make a comparative study of the customer brand satisfaction and loyalty with regard to selected companies.
- b) To gain a complete understanding of customers psyche towards brand esteem feelings and brand recommendation.

Research Design

The research design and methodology is presented under the following heads,

Nature and Source of Data

The proposed study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Data collection methods –**a-Primary data –**

Primary data are the data collected to help solve a problem or take advantage of an opportunity on which a decision is pending. In this research primary data will be collected through self administered questionnaire. The questionnaire will be administered on selected customers of Videocon, LG and Onida Company. Three separate questionnaires are prepared for the following consumer durables Television, Washing machines and Microwave ovens.

b- Secondary data –

Secondary data is that is developed for some purpose like for other surveys. Secondary data gives a valid support for a research, if the data is more accurate and relevant. It gives insights for a research and more over it is cheap and less time consuming to collect secondary data. In this research the secondary data will be collected through existing studies on customer satisfaction and related studies like consumer preference, consumer behavior and any relevant study regarding consumer durables. Secondary data is also elicited through various journals, text books and websites.

Sampling procedure

The sampling process consists of following sequential steps,

a- Sample frame –

A sampling frame is a means of representing the elements of population. A sampling frame can be telephone directory, city directory, listing of customers etc. In this study sample frame is taken from the list of existing customers and from various retailers of selected cities.

b- Sample unit –

It is the basic unit containing the elements of population to be sampled. In this study the sample unit is the Households who has purchased the products of selected companies.

c- Sampling method –

The sampling method is the way the sample units are to be selected.

In order to achieve the objectives of research the following sampling method is used: Probability, random sampling.

d- Sample size – The population (refers to all the users of the products of the LG, Videocon and Onida companies) of this sample is very vast. It is around one lakh. If we consider one percent the total population the sample size is around 1000. The sample size in this study is selected on simple random sampling method. The sample size will be **900** in total, consisting of 300 (100 for each product and each company) customers each of Videocon, Onida and LG and for television, Microwave ovens and washing machines only. The selected sample of 100 for each product break up is as follows: 50 respondents were selected from Hubli as it is major city. The second major city is Belgaum so 30 respondents were taken from Belgaum and 20 respondents were taken from Dharwad city. All the respondents were taken from middle class income group.

Data Analysis

Data collected will be analyzed with the help of Chi-square test of independence.

"Chi-square test" is often shorthand for Pearson's chi-square test.

Chi-square test (also **chi-squared** or χ^2 test) is common statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic has a chi-square distribution when the hypothesis is true, or any in which the probability distribution of the test statistic (assuming the hypothesis is true) can be made to approximate a chi-square distribution as closely as desired by making the sample size large enough. ⁶

Tools used

Structured questionnaire will be used for eliciting the customer satisfaction level on selected sample. The questionnaire will be scientifically designed by using various types of questions (Open ended questions, Dichotomous questions) and Likert rating scale. The questionnaire is self administered. Each parameter is clearly explained to respondents before eliciting data.

Hypotheses Statement

H₀= There is no significant difference in brand satisfaction and loyalty among the selected companies product.

H_A = There is significant difference in brand satisfaction and loyalty among the selected companies product.

Comparative Analysis of Brand Loyalty Television, Microwave & Washing machine

An exhaustive survey was conducted on 300 television, 300 microwave users and 300 washing machine users of selected companies. All together 900 customers were interviewed. The survey results are presented in the form of comparative charts. Data was elicited using scientifically designed questionnaire and appropriate statistical tools for this study. The validity of questionnaire and statistical tools are discussed below.

Questionnaire Validation

The questionnaire was a combination of few open ended questions and some dichotomous questions evaluated on Likert scale, considered an ideal platform to survey satisfaction levels, where the degree of agreements/disagreements and satisfaction/dissatisfaction was to be derived.

Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, which measures either positive or negative response to a statement. This scale avoids extreme responses as it happens dichotomous questions (Yes or No). Here the respondents get a liberty to present the degree of agreement or satisfaction. Likert responses can easily be collated to pie charts or bar charts. The format of typical likert scale is of five levels and is used in this study for all pre-determined customer satisfaction parameters. The added advantage of likert scale is that the statistical tool Chi square can be easily administered as for this study it was considered to be the most appropriate statistical tool. Likert is also helpful for other statistical test like Mann-Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis. Dispersion etc.

Apart from likert scales the other questions were framed to support the scale and structure the questionnaire to have a smooth flow. Some open ended questions were asked to collect some subjective data and to provide more scope to respondents in expressing their views to help analyze satisfaction levels.

Statistical Tool Validation

In this study the Chi square test was found to be an ideal test to find the comparative customers satisfaction on account of the following:

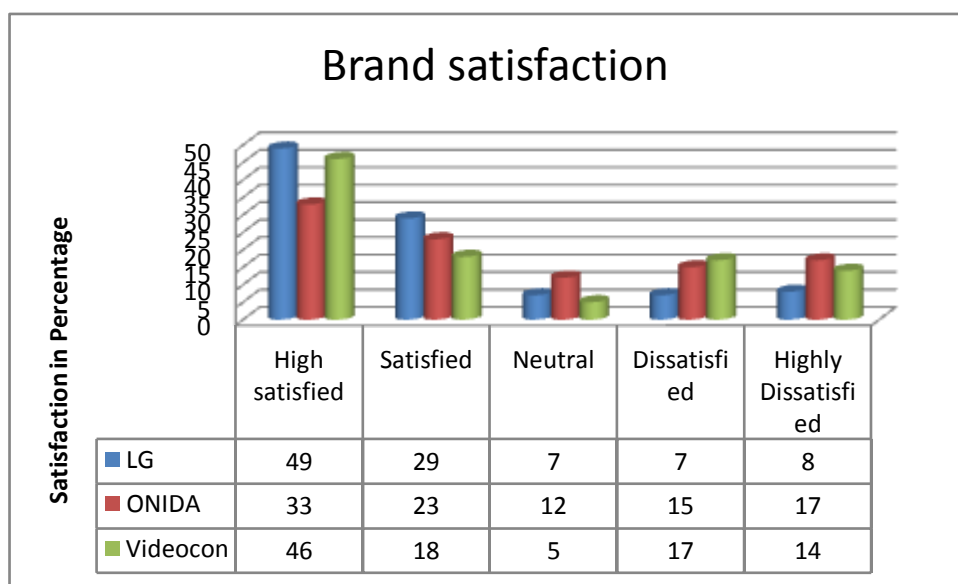
This test establishes whether or not an observed frequency differs from the expected or theoretical distribution. It tests a null hypothesis that the frequency distribution of certain events observed in a sample is consistent with a particular expected distribution. This is exactly what is needed for this study. Here the difference between the observed value and expected value of various customer satisfaction parameters are taken. This will help to achieve the objectives of our study and test hypothesis.

The Chi-square is calculated by finding the difference between each observed and expected value of each possible outcome, squaring them, dividing each by expected value and taking the sum of the results with some degree of freedom based upon the number of observed value.

It is the test of independence, where in the paired observations with two variables are found whether they are independent or not. Looking at the objectives and hypothesis of this study it was found appropriate. Therefore the Chi — square test is used in this study.

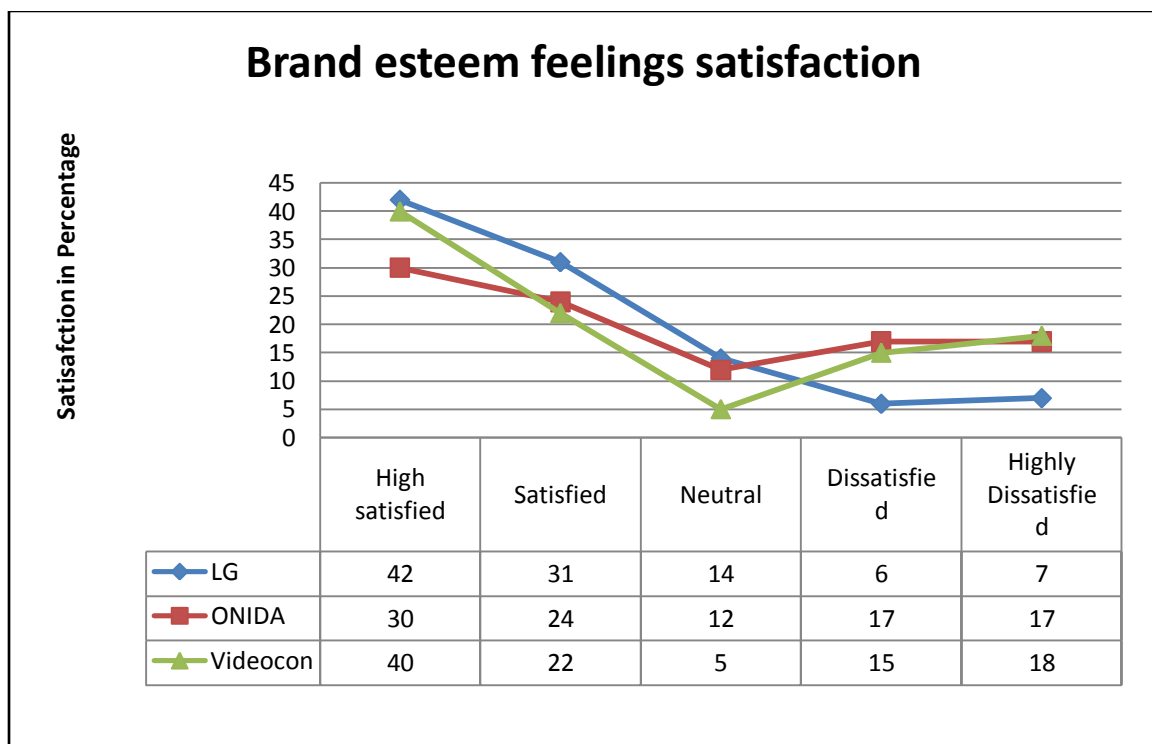
Discussion and Analysis - Television

Consumer brand preference and satisfaction of selected television companies



When the subject of brand satisfaction was raised the Indian consumer electronics giant Videocon was ranked at par with LG. A higher percentage of brand satisfaction i.e. 46 percent was seen. However marginally higher score of 49 percent was bagged by Korean firm LG. This shows the changing trend in terms of foreign brand preference as people are enthusiastic to buy Indian Brands. Although some people are having some distrust on Indian brands; this may be because of their previous experience or references given to them. The technology used by Indian companies is also good in recent days. The latest products of domestic firms are performing well. The higher satisfaction in terms of brand preference for Videocon may be due to its advertising campaign for positioning it as an "INDIAN MNC" and even brand ambassador Shahruk Khan is promoting the brand. Even brand Onida is preferred, though it is low as compared to LG or Videocon, but the Brand satisfaction for Onida is quite appreciable. The brand mascot of Onida i.e. "Devil" is very popular. The reason of low satisfaction and preference may be because of very low advertisements in recent past.

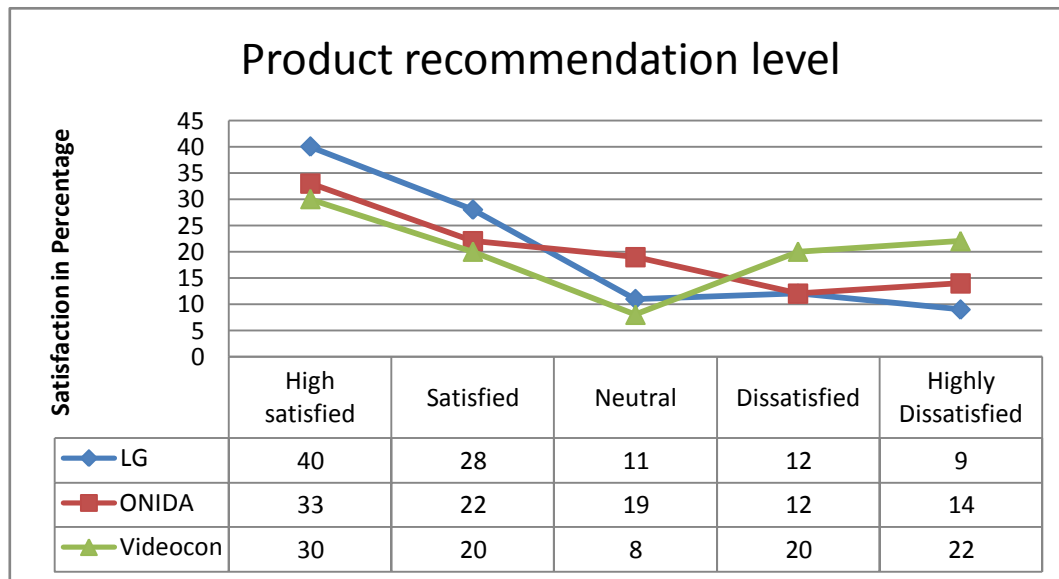
Customers brand esteem feelings of selected television companies



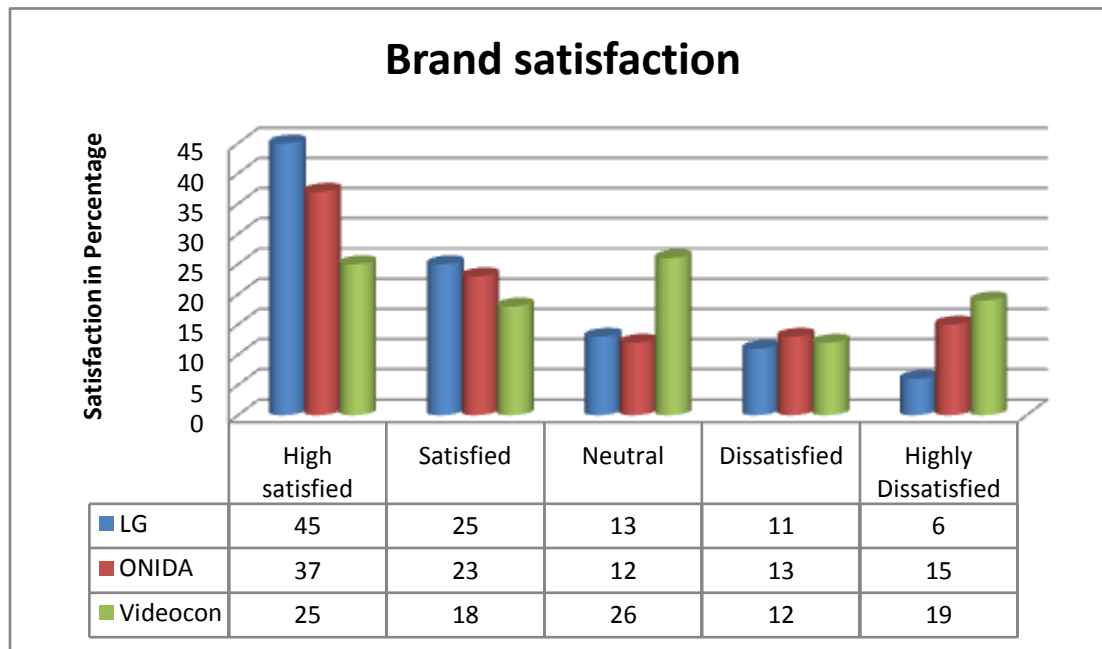
The chart reveals that there is a neck to neck competition between the LG and Videocon for a feeling of pride and esteem for their brand by the users. When television users were asked about the

satisfaction of owning their brands, LG got a response on a positive side by 42 percent, followed by Videocon at 40 percent and by Onida at 30 percent respectively. This again indicates that the Indian's don't have any issues in buying Indian make televisions. However the rate of dissatisfaction with some users is higher in Indian companies as compared to LG. If Indian companies upgrade themselves, they can give a tough competition to foreign MNC's. Videocon is trying hard to make its presence felt as high quality and innovative company. The value statement of this company goes like this "Experience Change" and their new green logo is an added feather on the cap. This can be a big image booster for Videocon, which might be helping the users of Videocon to have more self-esteem about their TV brand.

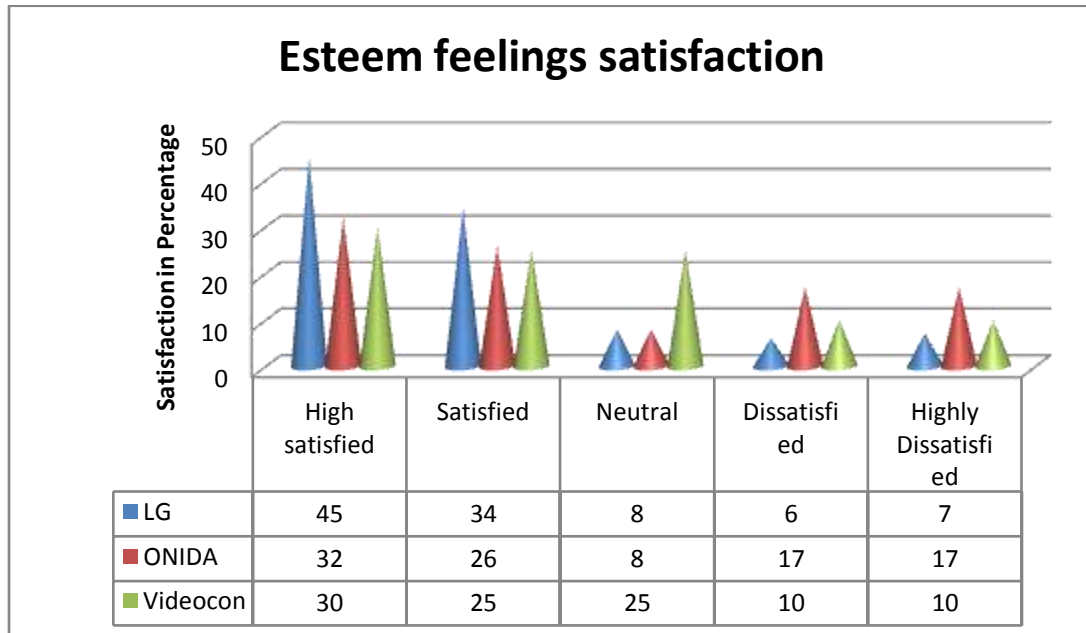
Product recommendation of selected television companies



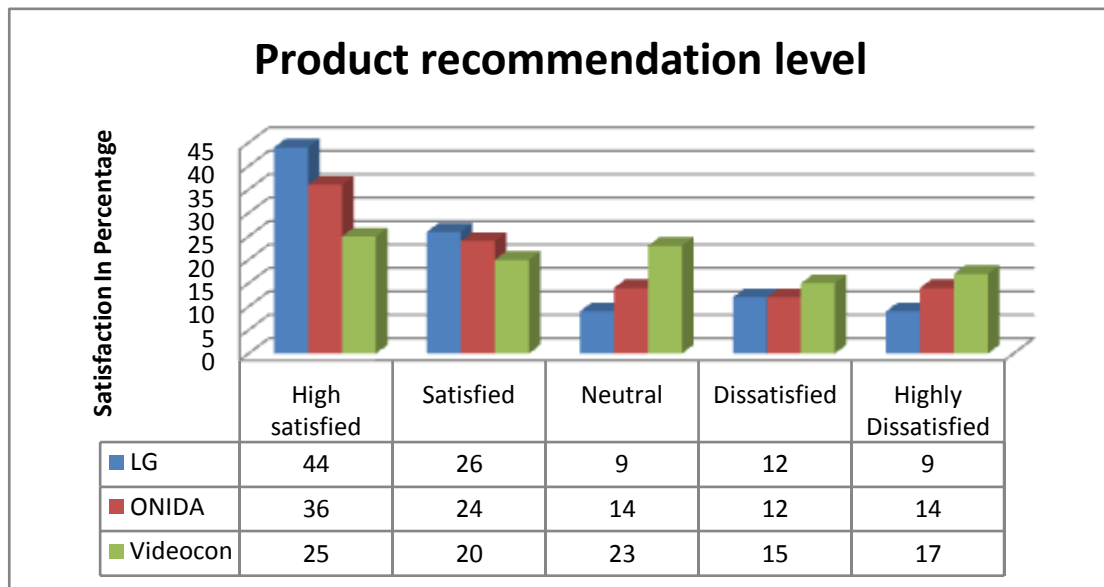
The chart educates the customer's product commendation to others. The users of selected television companies were asked whether they were willing to recommend their television brands to their friend and relatives. The LG products were ranked high as they were highly motivated to do so. Among the LG users 40 percent were awfully willing to advocate the brand and another 28 percent also showed interest in recommending the brand to friends, colleagues and relatives. In case of Videocon around 30 percent showed peak willingness and another 20 percent were willing to recommend. It is closely followed by Onida. As more number of LG users is willing to recommend the products, it is a healthy indication for LG and a worry for Indian companies. The Indian firms have to go long way in improving their standards.

Discussion and Analysis - Microwave
Consumer brand satisfaction of selected microwave companies

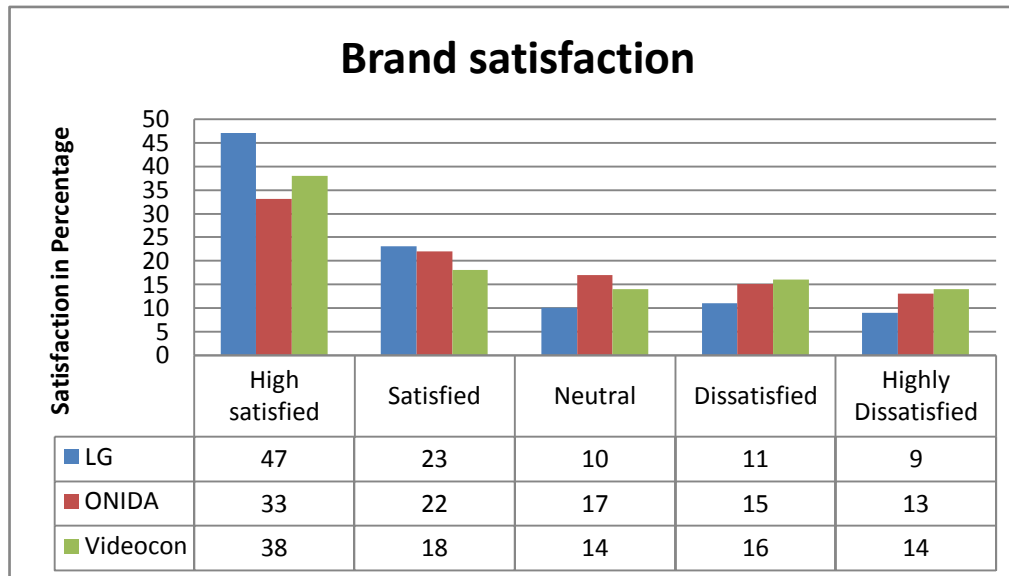
The above visual aid shows the customer reaction for the brand satisfaction of selected microwave companies. From the chart it is quite clear that LG brand users are more satisfied than Onida or Videocon. Among the LG users 45 percent were highly satisfied with the brand. The satisfaction for the domestic brand users was 37 percent and 25 percent for Videocon and Onida respectively. The domestic brands are well known and they have got good image, but in the case of microwaves these brands have not carved a niche in customers mind. This can be a reason for dissatisfaction with domestic LG brands. The chart indicates that even the dissatisfaction level is much higher compared to LG.

Customers brand esteem feelings of selected microwave companies


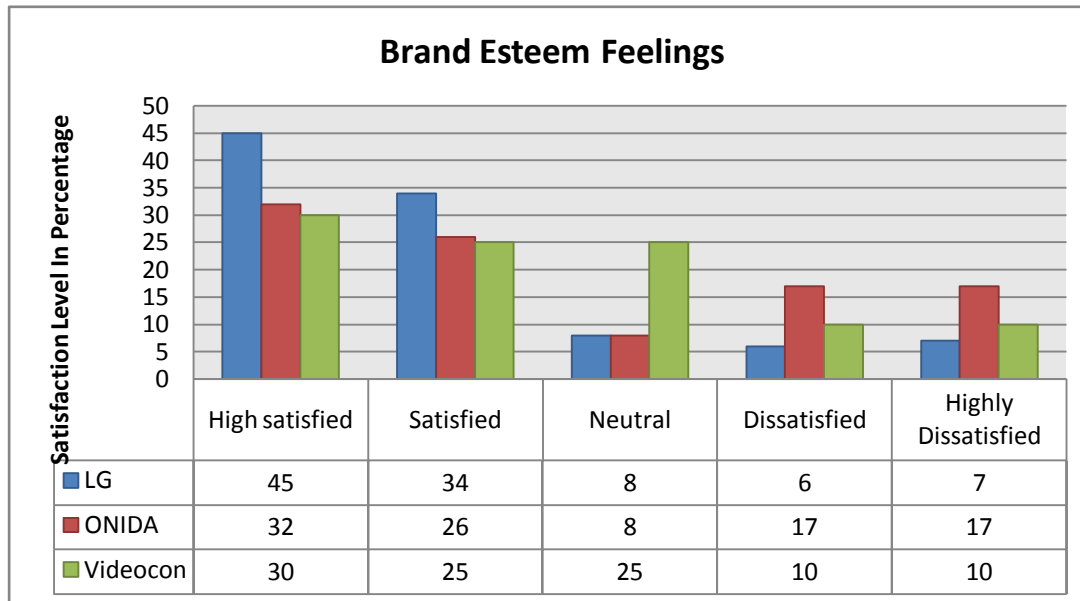
When micro wave users were asked about the sense of pride or esteem feeling of owning their brands LG got a response on a positive side by 45 percent, followed by Onida at 32 percent and Videocon at 30 percent. Onida is trying hard to make its presence felt as a high quality and innovative company; it has agreed for some alliance with international vendors for microwave components. The higher dissatisfaction for brand esteem may be also because the social class. The buyers of such products usually belong to high income group, occupation and educated people. This category of people may be skeptical about the Indian brands.

Product recommendation of selected microwave companies


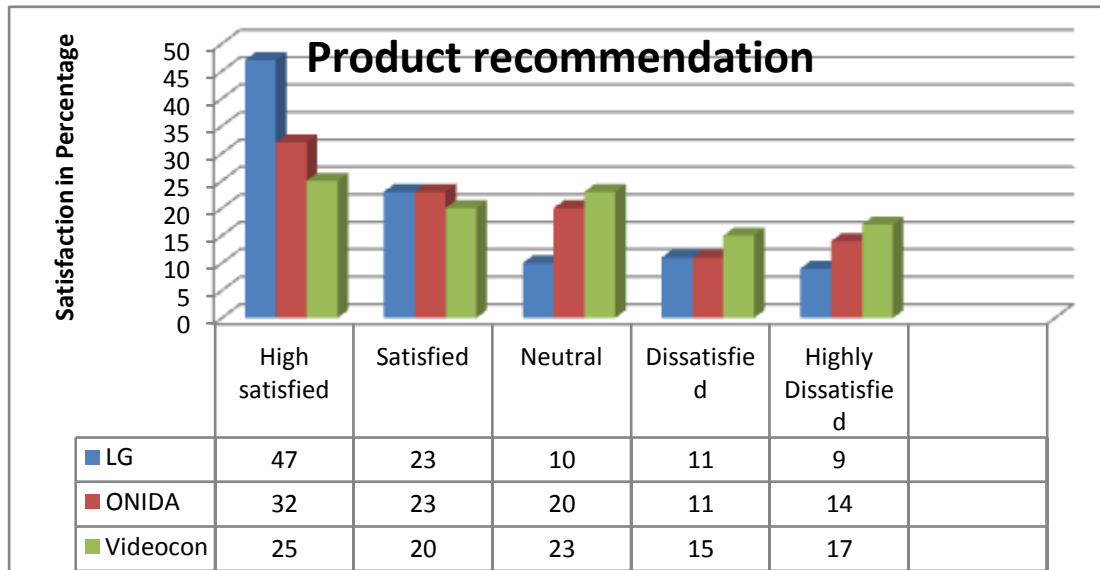
When the users of selected companies were asked whether they were willing to recommend the micro wave brands, the LG was ranked high. Among the LG users 44 percent were very much willing to recommend the brand and another 26 percent also showed interest in recommending the brand to their friends, colleagues and relatives. In case of Onida around 36 percent showed highest willingness and another 24 percent were willing to recommend. The users of Videocon microwaves were not much willing to refer the products to others. This is major issue for Videocon; even some gave very serious negative feedback. It is also seen in the chart as high as 17 percent are highly dissatisfied.

Discussion and Analysis - Microwave
Consumer brand satisfaction of selected washing machine companies


When the issue of brand satisfaction was raised the Korean giant LG dominated the customer's perception. Videocon was perceived as good brand in case of televisions but in the case of washing machines it was marginally left out. 70 percent of LG users perceived it as a good brand and showed satisfaction for the brand. It is immediately raced by Videocon, 56 percent of users perceived it as a good brand. In washing machines Onida was ranked almost equally to Videocon in terms of brand satisfaction among the selected companies. The domestic firms must develop some proper branding strategies. It is also seen that there is high level of dissatisfaction for the domestic brand names.

Customers brand esteem feelings of selected washing machine companies


The above chart reveals that there is a neck to neck competition between the Onida and Videocon for a feeling of pride or esteem by their washing machine users. When the washing machine users were asked about the satisfaction of owning their brands LG got a response on a positive side by 45 percent, it is followed by domestic firms which have almost same level of satisfaction that is around 30 percent. This again indicates that Indian brand have not carved a comfortable position in the consumers mind. It is also found that even the dissatisfaction level is very high in domestic firms. If the customers don't possess good brand image it is very difficult to capture market. Among the domestic firms Videocon is at comfortable position that Onida in terms of brand esteem feelings.

Product recommendation of selected washing machine companies


When the users of selected companies were asked whether they were willing to recommend the washing machine brands to others the LG was ranked high. Among the LG users 47 percent were very much willing to recommend the brand and another 23 percent also showed interest in recommending the brand to friends, colleagues and relatives. In case of Videocon around 25 percent showed highest willingness and another 20 percent were willing to recommend. As the larger number of LG users are willing to recommend the products, it is a healthy indication for LG and worry for Indian companies. The Indian firms have to go long way and improve their standards. The dissatisfaction level among the domestic company is equally low; this indicates many users of domestic brands are unwilling to spread goodwill for the company.

Hypotheses Testing of Selected Consumer Durables

On the basis of preliminary exploratory study the hypotheses were made for selected consumer durables. The hypothesis testing was done with the Chi square test.

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is a hypothesis about a population parameter. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to test the viability of the null hypothesis in the light of primary data. Depending on the data, the null hypothesis either will or will not be rejected as a viable possibility. The null hypothesis is the reverse of what the experimenter actually believes; it is put forward to allow the data to contradict it. In this study of the customer satisfaction, the expected outcome is the customer satisfaction is not same among all the selected companies and the LG firm is better than the Indian companies Videocon and Onida. If the primary data show a sufficiently large difference between the Chi square value and the table value (table value must be less than Chi x^2 value), then the null hypothesis will be rejected and alternate hypothesis will be accepted.

The null hypothesis is typically a hypothesis of no difference. That is why the word "null" or "null hypothesis" is used, it is the hypothesis of no difference.

Alternative Hypothesis

In hypothesis testing, the null hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis are put forward. If the data are sufficiently strong to reject the null hypothesis, then the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of an alternative hypothesis. For instance, if the null hypothesis were that $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$ then the alternative hypothesis would be $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3$. (In this study the $\mu_1 \mu_2 \mu_3$ are the three selected company products). The scale was reduced to single digit by giving the scores to satisfaction levels for likert scale as follows: Highly satisfied *+2 Satisfied *+1 Neutral *0 Dissatisfied *-1 Highly Dissatisfied *-2.

Hypothesis Television

H_0 = There is no significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies television product.

H_A = There is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies television product.

To test the above hypothesis the following three parameters concerned to brand image are taken; brand preference and satisfaction, esteem feelings for the brand and brand recommendation. In this case and three selected companies observed data is plotted into a table and Chi-square formula is being applied with Degree of freedom 4 at 95 percent confidence level.

The following result was observed in brand preference for Television product of selected companies.

Chi - square Value*	28.35
Table Value*	9.49

* Table value and X^2 value

The table value is found less than the chi-square values so null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted, therefore it can be inferred as there is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies television product

Hypothesis Microwave

H_0 = There is no significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies microwave product.

H_A = There is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies microwave product.

To test the above hypothesis the following three parameters concerned to brand image are taken, brand preference and satisfaction, esteem feelings for the brand and product recommendation. In this case and three selected companies observed data is plotted into a table and Chi-square formula is being applied with Degree of freedom 4 at 95 percent confidence level.

The following result was observed in brand preference for microwave product of selected companies.

Chi - square Value*	26.27
Table Value*	9.49

* Table value and X^2 value

The table value is found less than the chi-square value so null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted, therefore it can be inferred as there is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies microwave product

Hypothesis Washing Machines

H_0 = There is no significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies washing machine product.

H_A = There is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies washing machine product.

To test the above hypothesis the following three parameters concerned to brand image are taken, brand preference and satisfaction, esteem feelings for the brand, and product recommendation. In this case and three selected companies observed data is plotted into a table and Chi-square formula is being applied with Degree of freedom 4 at 95 percent confidence level.

The following result was observed in brand preference for washing machine product of selected companies.

Chi - square Value*	14.84
Table Value*	9.49

* Table value and X^2 value derivation refer Annexure III

The table value is found less than the chi-square values so null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted, therefore it can be inferred as there is significant difference in brand loyalty among the selected companies washing machine product.

Findings

An arresting issue was noticed in customer brand loyalty. The domestic companies have also scored very competitively for brand satisfaction. In case of television, the Videocon (46 percent) firm is very close to LG (49 percent). There is a neck to neck competition between the LG and Videocon for a feeling of pride and esteem for their brand by the users.

When television users were asked about the satisfaction/pride of owning their brands, LG got a response on a positive side by 42 percent, followed by Videocon at 40 percent. There is hardly a gap of 2 percent. This indicates that Indians do not have any hitch backs to buy domestic brands, provided it gives a better value for money. On the other hand many users were proud to own an Indian television brand.

Another imperative issue noticed in the study was on willingness to recommend the brand. The LG television company customers are willing to recommend their television brands to their friend and relatives in a higher magnitude than Videocon and Onida. The LG products were ranked high as they were highly motivated to do so. Among the LG users 40 percent were awfully willing to advocate the brand. In case of Videocon around 30percent showed peak willingness and Onida at 33 percent.

Among the LG washing machine users 47 percent were very much willing to recommend the brand and another 23 percent also showed interest in recommending the brand to friends, colleagues and relatives. In case of Videocon around 25 percent showed highest willingness and another 20 percent were willing to recommend. As more number of LG users are willing to recommend the products, it is a healthy indication for LG and a worry for Indian companies.

In case of microwave the brand satisfaction of Onida (37 percent) is competitively placed to its foreign rival LG (45 percent). However LG wins in this category of products also.

Conclusion

The overall brand esteem feelings for LG is much superior compared to domestic firms. The domestic company product users were not able to express their satisfaction in terms of pride in ownership. The customers were not willing to advocate the brand and spread the goodwill.

There was a close competition in loyalty between LG and Videocon for television category. It is a very motivating for Videocon. However the Microwave and Washing machines users of the firm LG scored

more for brand satisfaction. In case of washing machines brand Videocon, the customer satisfaction level is quite competitive to LG. If Videocon strive more for excellence it may outperform LG in many markets. Onida has not made much impression among the customers in washing machine profile, but in microwave segment Onida is marginally better than Videocon. This indicates that there is shifting trend in consumers buying behavior, gradually people are moving from foreign brands preference to Indian brands. This trend is still in juvenile stage; the domestic firms have to extent their horizons and move an extra mile in brand positioning and customer service.

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