

## **CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRAND CHOICES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This case paper aims to analyze and understand the factors influencing consumer choices between competing brands across different product categories. The paper examines the brand choices made by consumers in specific pairs of brands, such as Maggi vs. Top Ramen, Tata Tea vs. Red Label, Dove vs. Pears, and so on. It explores the preferences of consumers and the underlying factors that contribute to their decision-making process. The paper discusses the role of choice models and consumer behavior theories in understanding brand preferences and offers insights into marketing strategies that can influence consumer choices.

**Keywords:** Consumer preferences, Consumer psychology, Cultural factors, Decision-making process, Competitive analysis.

### **Introduction**

The significance of consumer brand choices lies in their ability to determine the success or failure of a brand. In an era where consumers are bombarded with countless products and services, they have become discerning and selective about the brands they choose to associate themselves with. Consumers' brand choices not only influence the financial performance of companies but also have far-reaching implications for their market position, customer loyalty, and overall reputation. A brand that fails to resonate with its target audience and differentiate itself from competitors is likely to fade into obscurity. On the other hand, a brand that understands consumer preferences and aligns its offerings accordingly stands a better chance of capturing market share and fostering long-term customer loyalty.

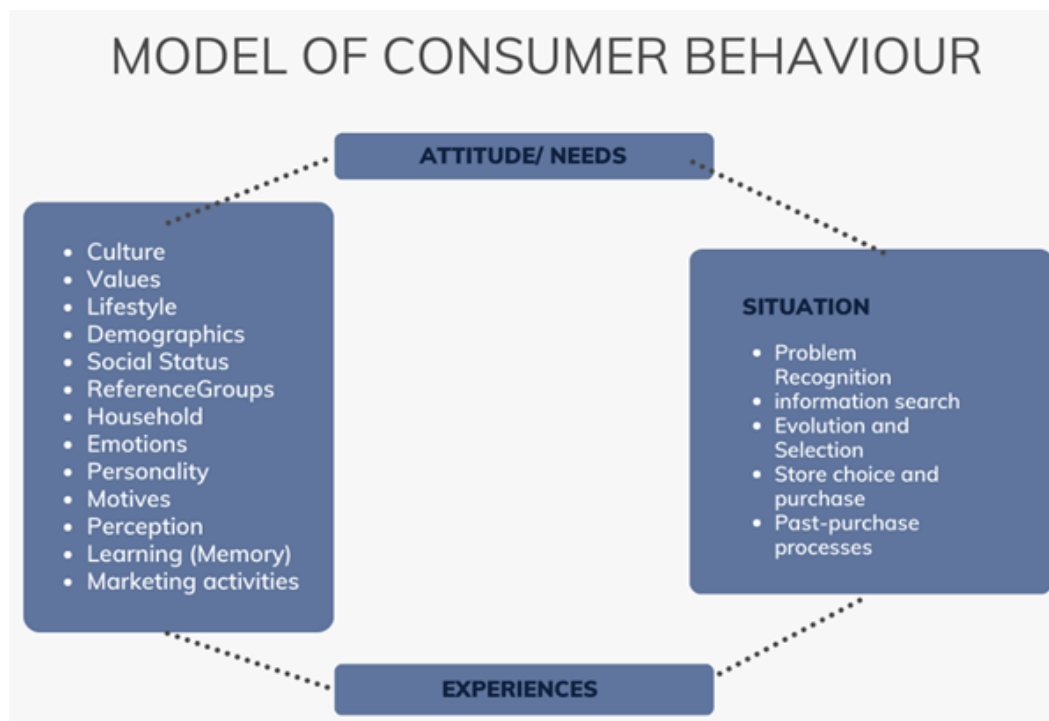
More than addressing consumers' fundamental requirements and desires is needed to fully comprehend their choices. It necessitates a profound comprehension of their fundamental drives, objectives, and principles. Personal experiences, cultural influences, social pressures, and

psychological motivators are just a few of the many variables that have an impact on consumer decisions. For marketers and companies to successfully meet the demands and preferences of their target market, understanding consumer behavior is essential. To describe how consumers make decisions, numerous theories and models have been proposed.

The next section analyses each pair of brands mentioned in the list individually, examining the factors that influence consumer choices.

### **Psychological Factors**

To meet the needs and requirements of consumers, it is crucial to understand the psychological factors that impact their buying behavior. When exploring the first step in which the consumer recognizes a problem or an opportunity, it is clear that their behavior is mainly driven by motivation. The motivational process is considered to induce the consumer to behave in a certain way and is reflected upon a specific need or desire that the consumer has. Generally, when the purchase is based on a need, it tends to be habitual. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged that social media can create both a desire and function as guidance while searching for information. Consumers can gain inspiration and information from different social media channels through opinion leaders and the perception of content posted. Further, all consumers differ in terms of personality characteristics and way of living in the context of their day-to-day activities, opinions, interest, preferences, and patterns of consumption. When searching for information and evaluating the alternatives, it has been clear that the socialization process, interest, and existing knowledge, significantly impact consumer buying behaviour. The older a consumer is, the more they seem to search for information and value the quality of the product. As all consumers have different personalities and lifestyles, they also differ in terms of their preferences. When evaluating alternatives, most consumers consider the familiarity and loyalty they have towards a brand or product before making a purchase. Further, they reflect upon whether they want to act upon their ideal or actual self and which product characteristics best fit their lifestyle. In terms of product characteristics and preferences, consumers tend not to prioritize sustainability in the make-up industry in contrast to others, because of the assumption that it is sustainable and cruelty-free.



### **Brand Image**

Consumer decision-making is heavily influenced by brand perception. It includes consumer impressions, attitudes, and convictions regarding a brand. Customers frequently look for businesses that fit with their sense of self, way of life, and personal beliefs. Advertising, the caliber of the product, customer service, and social responsibility programs are just a few of the factors that can affect a brand's image. Strong and good brand perception increases a company's ability to draw in and keep repeat customers. Brand image plays an important role in influencing the customer's purchasing behavior. The company's focus is on strengthening its brand image for which they adopt social media campaigns, and environment-friendly products in order to satisfy customers by providing a high-quality product to influence their buying behavior. A brand's image encompasses the perceptions, beliefs, and associations that consumers have about a particular brand. It is formed based on various factors such as advertising, product quality, customer service, brand reputation, and word-of-mouth.

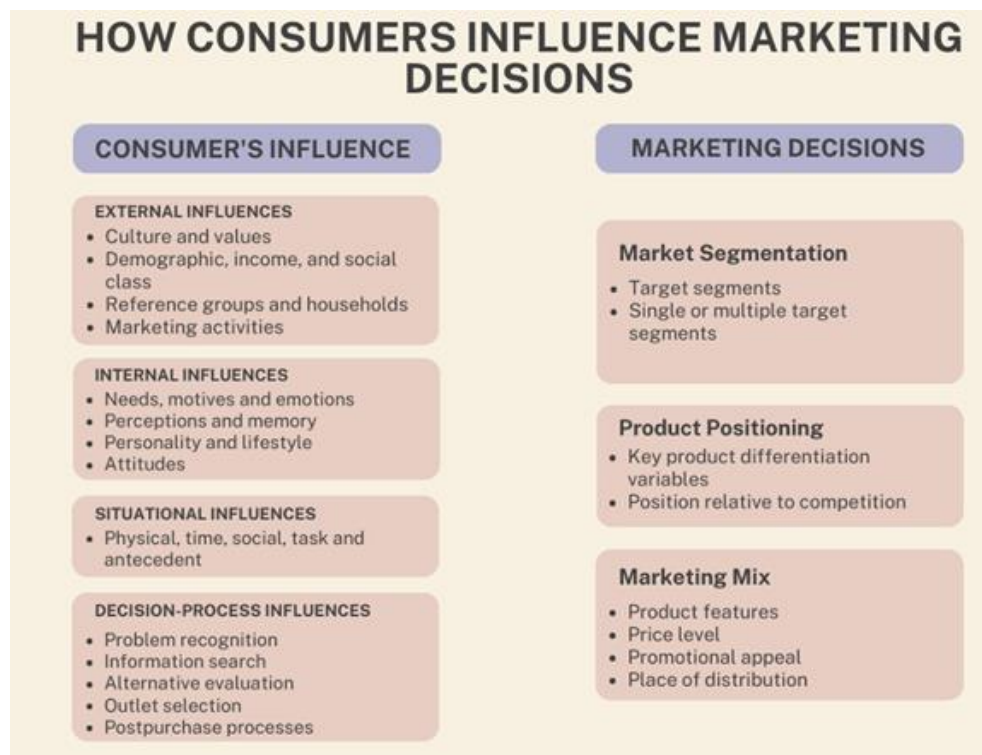
### **Product Attributes**

Defining the benefits that a product will provide is an essential phase in product development. These benefits are advertised and provided by observable product characteristics including quality, features, style, and design. These choices are particularly crucial since they have a significant impact on how consumers will react to a product. Consumer affect, cognition, and

behavior are significantly influenced by products and the features of those products. The values, beliefs, and life experiences of the consumer may be used to evaluate these qualities. The effectiveness of the product's marketing and other information also affects whether buying and using it is likely to be rewarding.

### **Cultural Influences**

Culture is a powerful force in regulating human behavior. It consists of a common set of behavior patterns that are transmitted and maintained by the members of a particular society through various means. Understanding the cultural variations that influence consumers' purchasing behaviors is essential for developing effective sales and marketing tactics. What we eat, dress, live in, and where we travel are all influenced by our cultures. It is also known to affect how we choose items to buy, how we use them, and how satisfied we are with them. These factors all have important effects on how products are developed, priced, distributed, and promoted. Customers' views of product attributes including packaging, size, shape, color, material, and branding are heavily influenced by their cultural upbringing and should therefore form the basis of all company decisions. People undergo periodic changes, and this includes changes in their likes and inclinations. Finding those is the first step towards success, and performance will determine the rest.

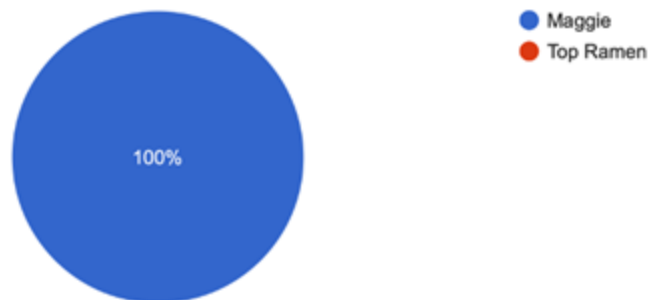


## Methodology

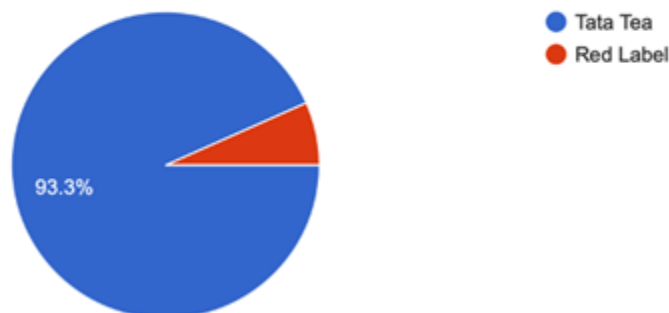
This study utilizes a survey-based research design to collect data from a sample of respondents. The survey includes a question related to the brand preference among the similar brand choices given. The sample size was determined using appropriate statistical techniques to ensure sufficient power and generalizability of the findings. The survey question was developed based on existing literature and theories related to brand choice and consumer behavior. The survey will be conducted through online platforms, such as web-based surveys or email invitations, to reach a wider audience efficiently. Participants will be invited to voluntarily complete the survey, and their consent will be obtained before proceeding. The research adheres to ethical guidelines, ensuring participant confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent. The study complies with relevant data protection and privacy regulations. The conclusions will be drawn based on the data analysis, addressing the research objectives and providing insights into the factors influencing the brand choice between similar brand pairs.

## Data Analysis

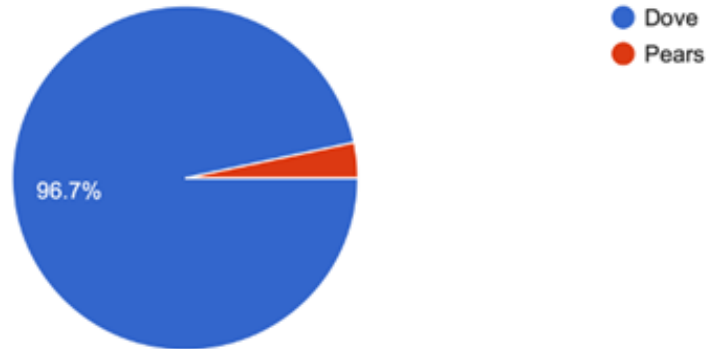
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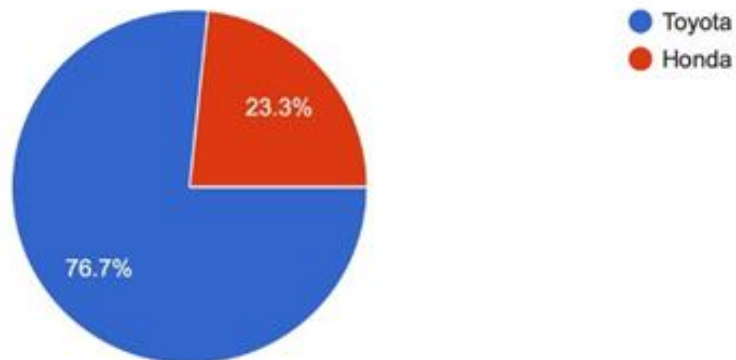
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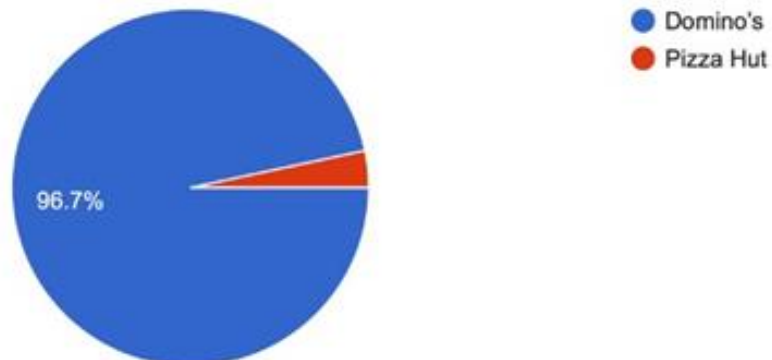
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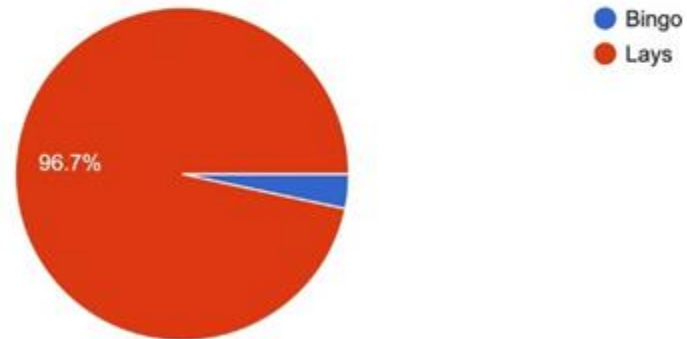
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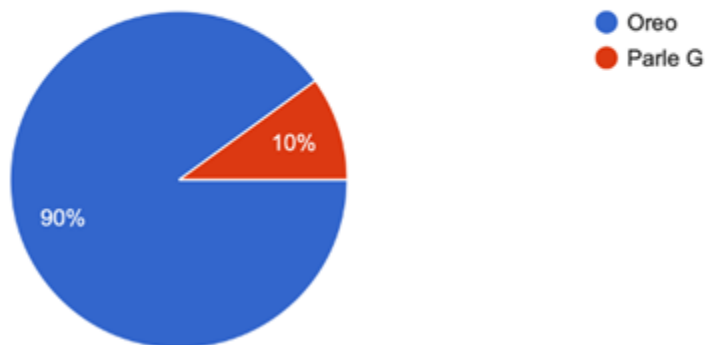
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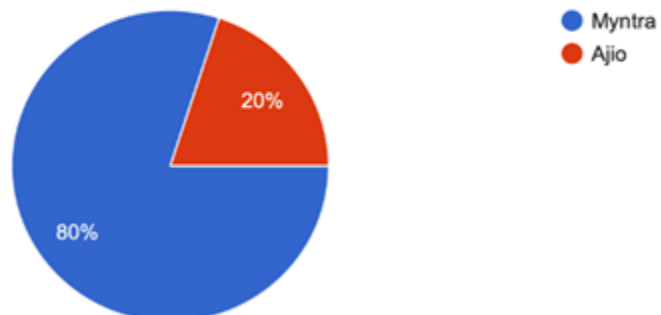
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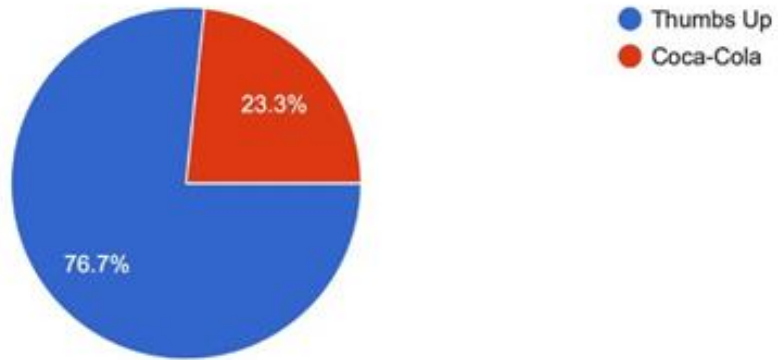
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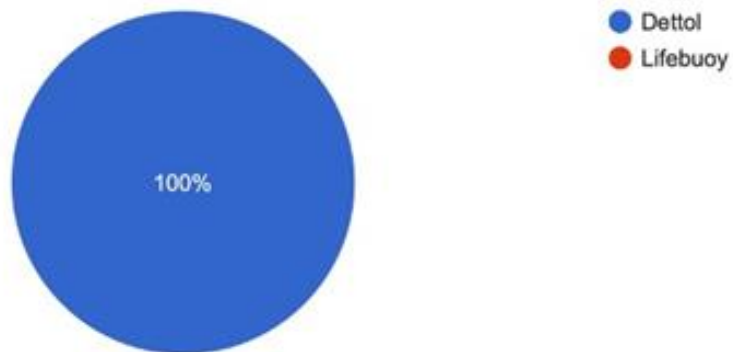
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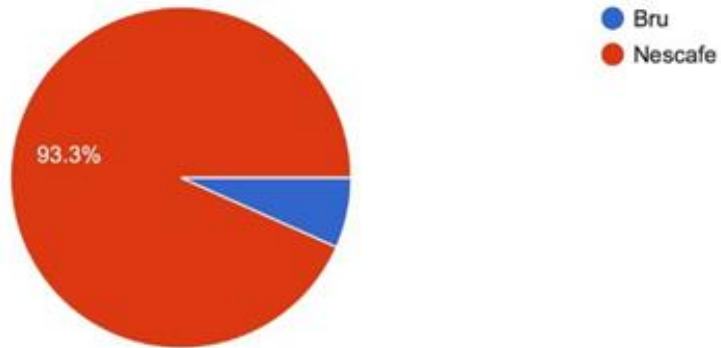


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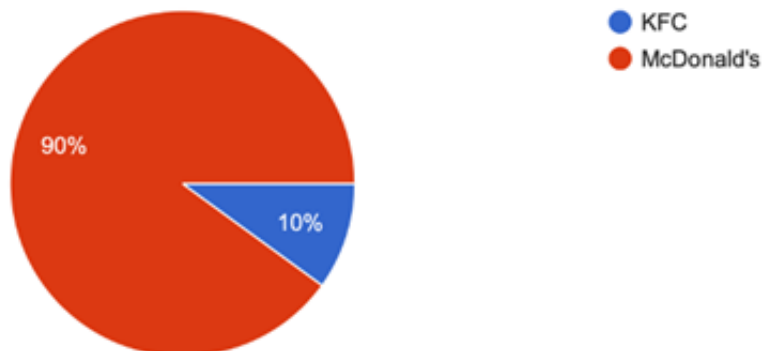




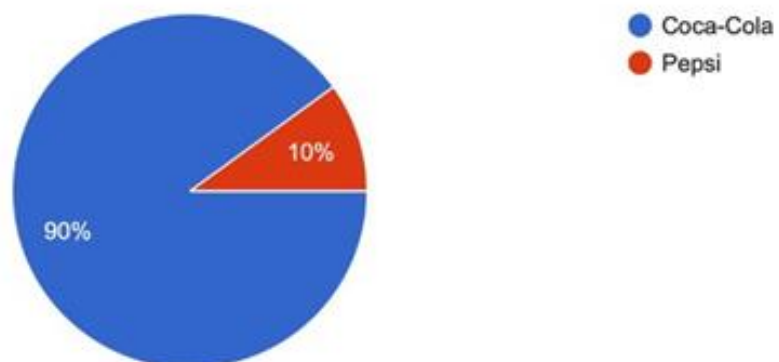
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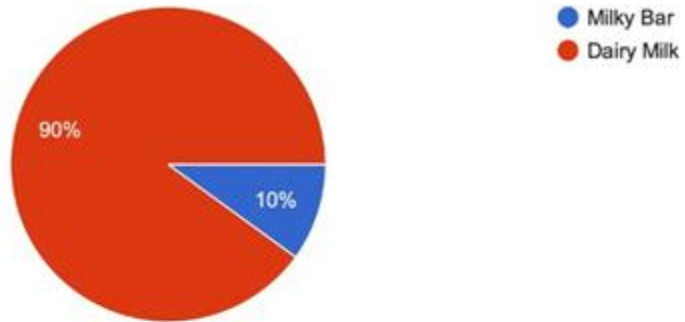
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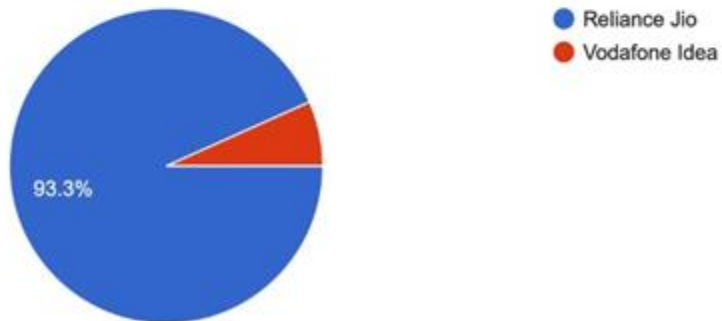
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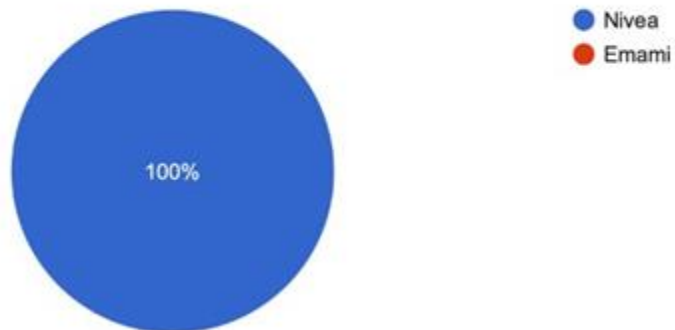
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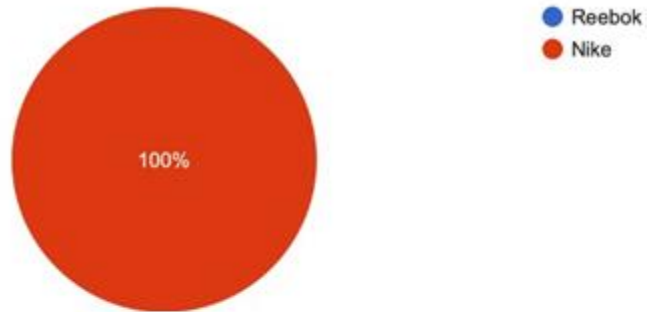
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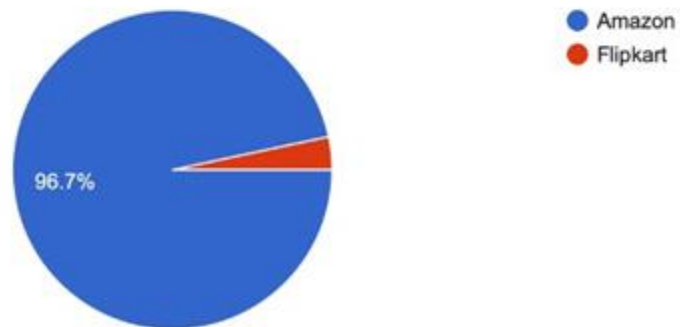
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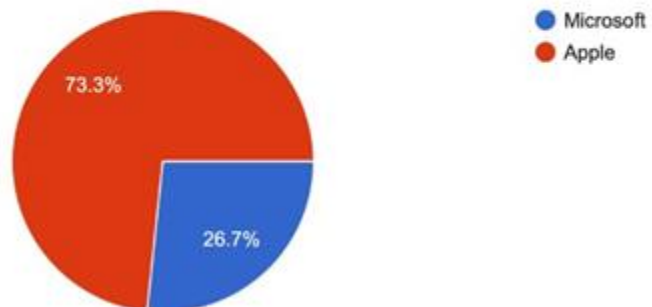
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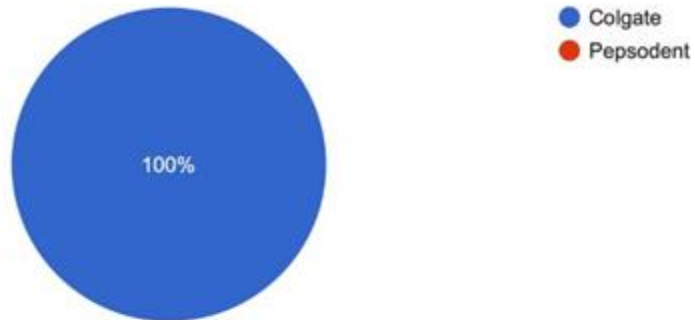
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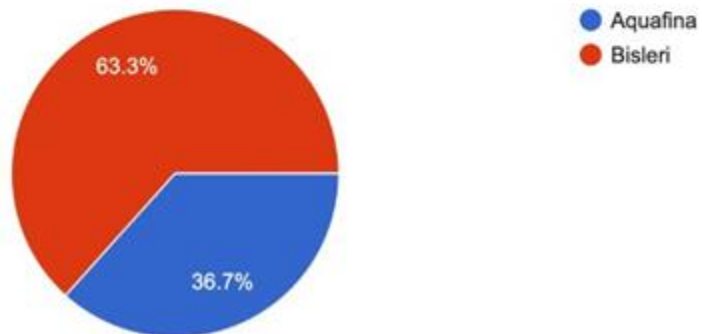
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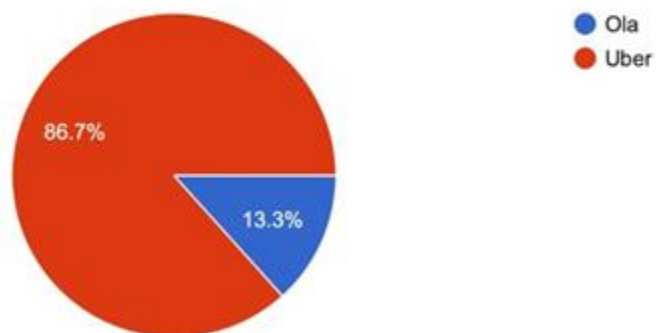
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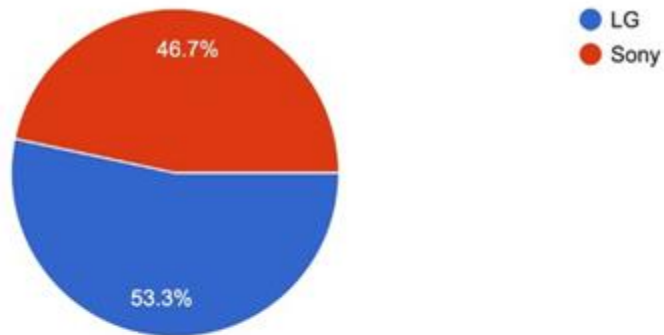
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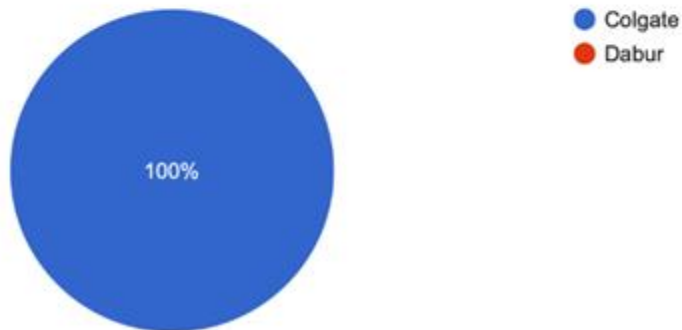
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### Findings and Discussion

1.	Maggie vs Top Ramen	The brand choice between Maggie and Top Ramen could be influenced by various factors such as taste preferences, price, availability, brand reputation, and marketing strategies. Maggie is a popular and well-established brand known for its instant noodles, while Top Ramen also offers a range of instant noodle options.
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2.	Tata Tea vs Red Label	Between the two well known brands, consumers may choose one brand over the other based on preferences for flavors, aromas, packaging, prices, and perceived levels of quality. Red Label may be viewed as a less expensive alternative whereas some consumers may identify Tata Tea with a premium posture. The choice of brand in this category is significantly influenced by marketing communication and consumer perceptions.
3.	Dove vs Pears	The brand choice could be influenced by factors such as skin type, fragrance preference, moisturizing properties, packaging, and brand image. Dove is often positioned as a moisturizing and nourishing brand, while Pears is known for its glycerine-based formula and gentle cleansing. Consumer preferences, skin concerns, and marketing efforts play a crucial role in influencing the brand choice between these two options.
4.	Toyota vs Honda	Making a choice between Toyota and Honda as a car manufacturer can be influenced by a variety of elements, including reliability, performance, fuel efficiency, safety features, cost, and aesthetic appeal. Both companies are well-known and offer a variety of automobiles to appeal to various consumer groups.
5.	Domino's vs Pizza Hut	Domino's and Pizza Hut are popular pizza chains. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as taste preference, delivery speed, pricing, menu variety, and promotional offers. Both brands have distinctive positioning and marketing strategies to attract consumers.
6.	Lays vs Bingo	Bingo and Lays are well-known chip brands. Taste, flavor options, packaging, cost, brand loyalty, and marketing initiatives could all have an impact on which brand consumers ultimately choose. Both companies make an effort to keep a strong market presence and provide a wide variety of flavors.

7.	Oreo vs Parle G	Oreo and Parle G are well-known biscuit brands. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as taste, texture, price, brand loyalty, and marketing communication. Oreo is often associated with indulgence and innovative flavors, while Parle G is known for its affordability and nostalgic appeal.
8.	Myntra vs Ajio	Popular e-commerce platforms in India include Myntra and Ajio. Product selection, cost, discounts, user experience, customer service, and brand reputation are just a few examples of the variables that may affect the brand you choose. To draw and keep customers, both platforms strive to offer a smooth online purchasing experience.
9.	Thumbs Up vs Coca-Cola	The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as taste preference, brand loyalty, marketing communication, pricing, and availability. Thumbs Up is often associated with a stronger and spicier flavor, while Coca-Cola has a milder taste profile and a global presence.
10.	Vicks vs Zandu Balm	The choice of one brand over the other may depend on elements including brand reputation, efficiency, aroma, cost, and personal preferences. Vicks have been around for a while and are well known, but Zandu Balm concentrates on herbal and natural elements.
11.	Dettol vs Lifebuoy	Dettol and Lifebuoy are prominent brands in the personal hygiene segment, specifically in the category of soaps and sanitizers. The brand choice may depend on factors such as brand reputation, antibacterial properties, fragrance, packaging, and marketing campaigns. Both brands emphasize hygiene and cleanliness.

12.	Nescafe vs Bru	Nescafe and Bru are popular coffee brands. The brand choice between them may be influenced by factors such as taste preference, aroma, pricing, packaging, and marketing efforts. Nescafe is often associated with instant coffee, while Bru offers a range of filter coffee options.
13.	KFC vs. McDonald's	KFC and McDonald's are well-known fast food chains. The choice between them may come down to things like taste preferences, menu variety, cost, practicality, and brand loyalty. Both companies have unique product lines and marketing approaches to cater to various consumer groups.
14.	Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi	Coca-Cola and Pepsi are two major players in the carbonated beverage industry. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as taste preference, brand loyalty, marketing campaigns, pricing, and availability. Both brands have a strong global presence and often engage in competitive marketing strategies.
15.	Dairy Milk vs Milky Bar	Popular chocolate brands include Milky Bar and Dairy Milk. They may choose one of the brands based on preferences for taste, texture, packaging, cost, and brand loyalty. While Milky Bar's white chocolate filling distinguishes it from Dairy Milk, the former is renowned for its creamy and smooth texture.
16.	Reliance Jio vs Vodafone Idea	Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea are major telecom service providers in India. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as network coverage, data plans, pricing, customer service, and brand reputation. Both brands aim to offer competitive services and attract subscribers.



17.	Nivea vs Emami	Nivea and Emami are well-known personal care brands. The brand choice between them may be influenced by factors such as product range, quality, pricing, packaging, and brand image. Nivea is often associated with a premium positioning and offers a wide range of skincare products, while Emami focuses on herbal and natural formulations.
18.	Nike vs Reebok	Nike and Reebok are prominent athletic footwear and apparel brands. The brand choice may depend on factors such as brand reputation, design aesthetics, performance, pricing, and endorsements. Both brands have a strong presence in the sports industry and target athletes and fitness enthusiasts.
19.	Amazon vs Flipkart	India's top two e-commerce sites are Amazon and Flipkart. The decision between the two brands may be influenced by elements including product selection, cost, special offers, shipping options, user satisfaction, and client testimonials. Both websites make an effort to offer reasonable prices and a pleasant online purchasing experience.
20.	Microsoft vs Apple	Microsoft and Apple are major technology companies. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as operating system preference, device ecosystem, software compatibility, design aesthetics, pricing, and brand loyalty. Both brands have a loyal customer base and offer a wide range of products and services.
21.	Colgate vs Pepsodent	Colgate and Pepsodent are popular oral care brands. The brand choice between them may be influenced by factors such as brand reputation, effectiveness in oral hygiene, taste, packaging, and pricing. Both brands emphasize the
		importance of oral health and offer a variety of toothpaste options.

22.	Bisleri vs Aquafina	Bisleri and Aquafina are well-known bottled water brands. The brand choice may depend on factors such as brand reputation, taste, purity, packaging, pricing, and availability. Both brands aim to provide clean and safe drinking water.
23.	Ola vs Uber	The two biggest ride-hailing services are Ola and Uber. Pricing, availability, dependability, user experience, driver quality, and promotions are only a few examples of the variables that may have an impact on the brand decision between them. Both platforms provide easy mobility options and make an effort to draw clients with appealing offerings.
24.	Sony vs LG	Sony and LG are renowned consumer electronics brands. The brand choice between them may depend on factors such as product quality, features, design, pricing, after-sales service, and brand reputation. Both brands offer a wide range of products in various categories.
25.	Colgate vs Dabur	Brand recognition, dental hygiene efficacy, natural ingredients, packaging, cost, and marketing messaging are just a few examples of the variables that may have an impact on the brand choice. While Dabur sells toothpaste with herbal formulas, Colgate is well known for its dental care products.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, this case paper conducted a comparative analysis of consumer decision-making in the context of brand choices. The study aimed to gain insights into the factors that influence consumers' brand choices. It was evident that consumer decision-making is a complex process influenced by various factors, including personal preferences, perceived brand image, product attributes, social influence, and marketing efforts which collectively shape consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards brands, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions.

The comparative analysis also sheds light on the differences in brand choices across product categories. Consumers exhibited varying levels of brand loyalty depending on the product type, with some categories witnessing stronger brand allegiance than others. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into consumer decision-making and brand choices. The findings emphasize the need for marketers to understand the diverse factors that drive consumer behavior and tailor their strategies accordingly.

However, it is important to note that this study has certain limitations. The research focused on a specific set of product categories, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore additional variables and include a diverse sample with various demographic sectors to enhance the understanding of consumer decision-making across various contexts.

In conclusion, this case paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge on consumer decision-making by providing a comprehensive comparative analysis of brand choices. It highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior. The insights gained from this research can aid marketers in developing effective strategies to influence consumers' brand choices and drive business success in today's competitive market.

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