

## A Comparative Study Of Customer Preferences Towards Tata Play And Sun Direct In Tenkasi District

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Cite this paper as: Dr. P.K. Ajit, Tamil Selvi B (2024) A Comparative Study Of Customer Preferences Towards Tata Play And Sun Direct In Tenkasi District. Journal of Neonatal Surgery, 13, 2597-2603

### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to compare customer preferences towards Tata Play and Sun Direct in Tenkasi District. The study is based on primary data collected from 165 customers through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling. The study focuses on the factors influencing customer preference, the level of preference, and the problems faced by customers. Factor analysis identified four major dimensions, namely Price & Package, Channel & Content, Technical Quality, and Service & Brand. The study found that Tata Play has a comparatively higher level of customer preference than Sun Direct. The findings also indicate that subscription cost, signal quality, attractive offers and customer service are important areas that require attention from DTH service providers..

**Keywords:** *DTH Services; Customer Preference; Tata Play; Sun Direct.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Direct-to-Home (DTH) service is a digital television broadcasting system through which television programmes are transmitted directly to customers through satellite signals. DTH services have become an important source of entertainment, information, education and news for households. Compared with traditional cable television, DTH services provide a wide range of channels, better picture and sound quality, flexible subscription packages and various value-added services. The Indian DTH market has several service providers offering different packages, pricing plans, regional-language channels, promotional offers and customer support facilities.

Among them, Tata Play and Sun Direct are important DTH service providers with a significant presence in the Indian market. Tata Play offers a wide range of channel packages and technology-based services, while Sun Direct is particularly known for its regional-language content and competitive subscription plans.

Customer preference towards DTH services may differ based on factors such as subscription cost, channel availability, regional content, picture and sound quality, signal strength, package flexibility, recharge convenience, promotional offers and customer service. Therefore, understanding customer preferences is important for DTH service providers to improve their services and retain customers. Tenkasi District provides a suitable setting to examine these preferences as customers may have different requirements based on their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Hence, the present study focuses on comparing customer preferences towards Tata Play and Sun Direct among customers in Tenkasi District and identifying the major factors influencing their choice and the problems faced while using these services.

### Statement of the Problem

Direct-to-Home (DTH) services have become an important source of television entertainment for many households. Tata Play and Sun Direct are two popular DTH service providers offering different channel packages, pricing plans, services, and customer support. Customers may choose between these providers based on their individual needs, preferences, and service experience.

In Tenkasi District, customers have different expectations regarding channel availability, subscription cost, picture and sound quality, offers, recharge facilities, and customer service. The availability of multiple DTH service providers has made customer choice more competitive. However, the factors that influence customers' preference may differ from one service provider to another.

Therefore, there is a need to compare customer preferences towards Tata Play and Sun Direct in Tenkasi District. The present study attempts to identify the factors influencing customer preference, compare the preferences of customers towards both DTH services, and understand the problems faced by users. The study may help DTH service providers understand customer needs and improve their services accordingly.

### Objectives of the Study

- ♣ To study the profile of customers using Tata Play and Sun Direct in Tenkasi District.
- ♣ To identify the factors influencing customers' preference towards Tata Play and Sun Direct.
- ♣ To compare the level of customer preference towards Tata Play and Sun Direct.
- ♣ To find out the problems faced by customers while using Tata Play and Sun Direct.

### Review of Literature

**Sharma and Sharma (2013)** have conducted "*A comparative study of DTH services in Gujarat*" to examine consumer perception, satisfaction and brand preferences in rural and urban markets. The study compared major DTH brands including Tata Sky and Sun Direct based on factors such as cost, customization and customer perception. The findings showed that Tata Sky was perceived as having a higher level of customization in the urban market, while Sun Direct and Dish TV were perceived as relatively similar in the rural market. The study also found that demographic factors such as age, income, occupation and gender did not have a significant relationship with brand preference. The authors suggested that DTH providers should consider regional differences while developing their pricing and service strategies.<sup>1</sup>

**Sutha and Jayanthi (2013)** have conducted "*A comparative study of various DTH service providers in Chennai*" to examine customers' preference, perception, and satisfaction towards different DTH services. The study compared providers including Sun Direct, Tata Sky, Dish TV, Airtel Digital TV, Big TV and Videocon D2H. The findings indicated that customers considered price, service quality, audio and video quality, channel availability and promotional activities while choosing a DTH service. Sun Direct had the largest customer base among the providers studied, while other providers were perceived to offer better service in certain aspects. The study suggested that DTH providers should focus on improving service quality, pricing and promotional activities to attract and retain customers.<sup>2</sup>

### Research Gap

Previous studies have compared different DTH service providers and examined customer preferences in various regions. However, limited attention has been given to a specific comparison between Tata Play and Sun Direct, particularly in Tenkasi District. Therefore, the present study focuses on comparing customer preferences towards these two DTH service providers and fills the geographical gap by conducting the study in Tenkasi District.

### Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design to study customer preferences towards Tata Play and Sun Direct in Tenkasi District. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 165 customers using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected through convenience sampling method. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research articles, websites and other relevant sources. The collected data were

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1 Sharma, A., & Sharma, R. (2013). Perception and satisfaction with direct to home services: A comparative study in Gujarat, India. *International Journal of New Innovations in Engineering and Technology*.

2 Sutha, A. I., & Jayanthi, L. (2013). A comparative study on the various direct-to-home (DTH) service providers in Chennai. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 3(7), 146–148.

analyzed using suitable statistical tools to compare customer preferences and identify the factors influencing their choice of DTH service.

## Data Analysis & Interpretation

### Demographic profile of the respondents

**Table No.1 Demographic profile of the respondents**

| Variable                  | Categories               | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender                    | Male                     | 92        | 55.76      |
|                           | Female                   | 73        | 44.24      |
| Age                       | Below 30 Years           | 58        | 35.15      |
|                           | 30–50 Years              | 72        | 43.64      |
|                           | Above 50 Years           | 35        | 21.21      |
| Educational Qualification | School Level             | 42        | 25.45      |
|                           | Undergraduate            | 68        | 41.21      |
|                           | Postgraduate & Above     | 55        | 33.33      |
| Occupation                | Salaried                 | 62        | 37.58      |
|                           | Business / Self-employed | 48        | 29.09      |
|                           | Others                   | 55        | 33.33      |
| Monthly Income            | Below ₹25,000            | 65        | 39.39      |
|                           | ₹25,000–₹50,000          | 61        | 36.97      |
|                           | Above ₹50,000            | 39        | 23.64      |

#### Source: Primary Data

The table shows that 55.76% of the respondents are male, while 44.24% are female. 43.64% of the respondents belong to the 30–50 years age group, followed by 35.15% below 30 years and 21.21% above 50 years. 41.21% of the respondents have undergraduate-level education, followed by 33.33% with postgraduate and above qualifications and 25.45% with school-level education. 37.58% of the respondents are salaried employees, 33.33% belong to other occupational categories, and 29.09% are engaged in business or self-employment. 39.39% of the respondents have a monthly income below ₹25,000, followed by 36.97% earning ₹25,000–₹50,000 and 23.64% earning above ₹50,000.

### Problems Faced by Customers while Using Tata Play and Sun Direct

**Table No. 2 Problems Faced by Customers while Using Tata Play and Sun Direct**

| Problems                      | Tata Play  |            | Sun Direct |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                               | Frequency  | %          | Frequency  | %          |
| High Subscription Cost        | 32         | 29.63      | 13         | 22.81      |
| Frequent Signal Disruption    | 28         | 25.93      | 21         | 36.84      |
| Limited Channel Availability  | 24         | 22.22      | 19         | 33.33      |
| Recharge/Payment Issues       | 18         | 16.67      | 14         | 24.56      |
| Poor Customer Service         | 22         | 20.37      | 17         | 29.82      |
| Delay in Complaint Resolution | 20         | 18.52      | 15         | 26.32      |
| Lack of Attractive Offers     | 16         | 14.81      | 25         | 43.8       |
| Package Flexibility Issues    | 19         | 17.59      | 12         | 21.05      |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>108</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>57</b>  | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Primary Data**

The table indicates that customers of both Tata Play and Sun Direct face different types of problems while using DTH services. Among Tata Play customers, high subscription cost is reported by 32 respondents (29.63%), followed by frequent signal disruption reported by 28 respondents (25.93%). Among Sun Direct customers, Lack of Attractive Offers is the most commonly reported problem, affecting 25 respondents (43.86%), followed by frequent signal disruption reported by 21 respondents (36.84%). Overall, the comparison indicates that the proportion of customers reporting problems is relatively higher among Sun Direct users for most of the identified problems.

**Level of Customer Preference towards Tata Play & Sun Direct****Table No.3 Level of Customer Preference**

| Level of Preference | Tata Play  |            | Sun Direct |            |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                     | Frequency  | %          | Frequency  | %          |
| High                | 52         | 48.15      | 22         | 38.60      |
| Moderate            | 38         | 35.19      | 23         | 40.35      |
| Low                 | 18         | 16.67      | 12         | 21.05      |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>108</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>57</b>  | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Primary Data**

The table shows that among Tata Play customers, 48.15% have a high level of preference, while 35.19 % have a moderate level and 16.67 % have a low level of preference. Among Sun Direct customers, 40.35 % have a moderate level of preference, followed by 38.60 % with a high level and 21.05 % with a low level. Overall, the results indicate that Tata Play customers show a comparatively higher level of preference than Sun Direct customers.

**Factors influencing customers' preference towards Tata Play and Sun Direct****Table No. 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

|                                                  |                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .782    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 856.427 |
|                                                  | df                 | 105     |
|                                                  | Sig.               | .000    |

**Source: Computed Data**

The KMO value of 0.782 indicates adequate sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, the correlation matrix is suitable for factor analysis.

**Table No. 5 Rotated Component Matrix**

| Factors             | F1   | F2    | F3   | F4    |
|---------------------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Subscription Cost   | .812 | -.030 | .008 | -.176 |
| Package Flexibility | .746 | .469  | .034 | .563  |
| Promotional Offers  | .721 | -.230 | .006 | .247  |

|                            |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Recharge Convenience       | <b>.684</b> | .469        | .034        | .563        |
| Channel Availability       | -.027       | <b>.824</b> | .027        | .066        |
| Regional Language Channels | .080        | <b>.796</b> | .444        | .048        |
| HD Channels                | -.166       | <b>.731</b> | .489        | .024        |
| Value-Added Services       | -.161       | <b>.668</b> | -.249       | .037        |
| Picture Quality            | -.052       | .101        | <b>.842</b> | .026        |
| Sound Quality              | .037        | -.024       | <b>.806</b> | .033        |
| Signal Strength            | .046        | -.139       | <b>.758</b> | .015        |
| Service Reliability        | .032        | .013        | <b>.692</b> | .019        |
| Customer Service           | -.087       | .246        | .100        | <b>.831</b> |
| Complaint Handling         | -.405       | .014        | -.296       | <b>.794</b> |
| Brand Image                | 0.14        | -.012       | .124        | <b>.651</b> |

Source: Computed Data

The factor analysis identified four major factors influencing customer preference towards Tata Play and Sun Direct. The four factors are Price & Package, Channel & Content, Technical Quality, and Service & Brand. Together, these factors explain 67.667% of the total variance, indicating that they have a substantial influence on customer preference.

**Table No. 6 Factors influencing customers' preference towards Tata Play and Sun Direct**

| Factor                   | Variables            | Factor loading |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Price & Package Factor   | Subscription Cost    | .812           |
| Channel & Content Factor | Channel Availability | .824           |
| Technical Quality Factor | Picture Quality      | .842           |
| Service & Brand Factor   | Customer Service     | .831           |

Source: Computed Data

The above table reveals that the Subscription Cost with factor loading of 0.812, Channel Availability with factor loading of 0.824, Picture Quality with factor loading of 0.842, Customer Service with factor loading of 0.831 are the variable with the higher loading factors of F1, F2, F3 and F4 respectively. Therefore, these are the four identified factors that mainly influence customers in selecting a particular DTH service provider.

### Findings

- ◆ The majority of the respondents are male (55.76%).

- ◆ The majority of the respondents belong to the 30–50 years age group (43.64%).
- ◆ The majority of the respondents have an undergraduate-level educational qualification (41.21%).
- ◆ The majority of the respondents are salaried employees (37.58%).
- ◆ The majority of the respondents have a monthly income below ₹25,000 (39.39%).
- ◆ Tata Play has a higher level of customer preference, with a high level of preference (48.15%), whereas Sun Direct customers predominantly exhibit a moderate level of preference (40.35%).
- ◆ The factor analysis identified four major dimensions influencing customer preference, namely Price & Package, Channel & Content, Technical Quality, and Service & Brand.
- ◆ Among Tata Play customers, high subscription cost (29.63%) was identified as the major problem, followed by frequent signal disruption (25.93%).
- ◆ Among Sun Direct customers, high subscription cost (43.86%) was identified as the major problem, followed by frequent signal disruption (36.84%).

### Suggestions

- \* DTH service providers should offer affordable subscription plans and flexible packages to reduce the burden of high subscription costs.
- \* Tata Play and Sun Direct should improve signal quality and service reliability to reduce frequent signal disruptions.
- \* Sun Direct should introduce more attractive promotional offers, discounts and special recharge benefits to improve customer preference.
- \* Both service providers should strengthen customer service and complaint-handling facilities to provide quick and satisfactory solutions to customers.

### Conclusion

The present study concludes that customer preference towards DTH services is influenced by various factors such as subscription cost, channel availability, package flexibility, technical quality and customer service. The study found that Tata Play has a comparatively higher level of customer preference, with a high level of preference being predominant among its customers, whereas Sun Direct customers show a comparatively higher moderate level of preference. The factor analysis further identified four major dimensions influencing customer preference, namely Price & Package, Channel & Content, Technical Quality, and Service & Brand.

The study also reveals that customers of both service providers face certain problems while using DTH services. High subscription cost was the major problem reported by Tata Play customers, while lack of attractive offers was the major problem reported by Sun Direct customers. Therefore, DTH service providers need to focus on affordable plans, attractive offers, better signal quality and improved customer service. Addressing these areas can help Tata Play and Sun Direct improve customer satisfaction and strengthen their position in the competitive DTH market.

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