

CONSUMERS PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS MOBILE PHONE BRANDS: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO CONSUMERS IN VIJAYAWADA.

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Abstract: There will be more mobile phones than the people in India by the year 2015. The inflow of many mobile manufacturers offering mobile phones at considerable lower prices has made it possible in India to afford a mobile phone virtually by anybody. In recent years, the demand for mobile phones is increasing. There are many players in the mobile phone industry. Though cell phone industry has its origin in the recent past, the growth has been excellent. To market their services, every company is adding many new features. Day by day, many new competitors enter the market with new attractive schemes, provide additional facilities, add new features to existing ones, reduce the charges for incoming and outgoing calls, introduce varieties of handsets, models a healthy competition that benefits the users. The market for cell phone has become very competitive. In this context, the purpose of the study is to find the consumers preference and satisfaction level towards mobile phone brands with special reference to consumers in Vijayawada was undertaken.

Keywords: Consumers, Mobile Brands, Satisfaction Levels.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone is the thing considered as status symbol not so long ago in India is now afforded by a rickshaw puller to a laborer. In its recent statement issued, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has revealed that the country's mobile subscriber base has increased from 893.84 million in December 2011 to 903.73 million in January 2012, growing by 1.11 per cent. The mobile users' demands are on high these days. They want their mobiles to be loaded with top end features but at affordable costs. With this huge market, the companies soon realized the importance of timely tapping it with appropriate products and marketing strategies.

The adoption of mobile phones has been exceptionally raised in many parts of the country for the last few years. It creates a separate stage in the minds of people among the old and new generation, as an essential part of life, which removes the communication gap that exists in earlier days. The question arises here is that how much the mobile phone users are satisfied with their product brand? Customer / consumer satisfaction is a meaningful key to open the paths of marketing and marketers success that relates to the profitability, brand promotion, creation of consumer value and customer involvement as well. This study surveyed 500 mobile phone users and looked at their preferences to purchase new mobile phones and satisfaction factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Customer satisfaction is the feelings of pleasure and disappointments resulting from the comparison of products, perceived performance or outcomes in relation to the person's prior expectations. The satisfaction is the level of a person's felt state resulting from comparing a products perceived performance (outcomes) in relation to the person's expectation (Kotler, 200). Seth et al (2008) analyzed that there is relative importance of service quality attributes and showed that responsiveness is the most importance dimension followed by reliability, customer perceived network quality, assurance, convenience, empathy and tangibles. Liu (2002) found that the choice of a cellular phone is characterized by two attitudes: attitude towards the mobile phone brand on one hand and attitude towards the network on the other.

Samuel (2002) observed that most of the respondents consider size, quality, price, instrument servicing are an important factors for selecting the handset while majority of the respondents are satisfied over the payment system, quality of services, coverage area and the process of attending the complaints regarding their mobile service provider. Nandhini (2001) examined that attitude of the respondents using cell phones was not influenced by either education or occupation and income. Kalpana and Chinnadurai (2006) found that advertisement play a

dominant role in influencing the customers but most of the customers are of opinion that promotional strategies of cellular companies are more sale oriented rather than customer oriented. Haqueet al (2007) suggested that price, service quality, product quality & availability, and promotional offer play a main role during the time to choose telecommunication service provider.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been designed with the following objectives:

1. Assessing the preference level of the mobile phone users of different brands in Vijayawada.
2. Finding the satisfaction level of the mobile phone users of different brands in Vijayawada.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The data used for this study were obtained basically from two sources primary and secondary. However, the major data for the work were collected by means of structured schedule. Total five hundred mobile phone users were administered for collecting data. The respondents were selected on convenient judgment randomly based at each of the locations of Vijayawada. Of the total 500 respondents, 300(60%) are male 200(40%) are female. The secondary data that is also of great assistance was extracted from various sources like relevant research articles published in referred journals, magazines websites, books etc.,

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The result of the study and analysis are presented hereunder:

Buying behavior consists of all the mental, emotional and physical efforts put in to a marketing setup to make a search for the best solution to the problem of unfulfilled demand by joining resources one have and the offers available in the brand. Usually awareness is expressed in terms of knowledge someone has for certain things and when someone shows preference for different attributes of a particular product or different brands of the same product. The mobile phone users in Vijayawada are well aware about their preference mobile set regarding the using brands. They are able to explore and express their experiences with different brand in use. This indicates their concern for and the understanding of the products in use.

Distribution of Consumer's by sex

Sex	Frequencies	Percentage
Male	300	60%
Female	200	40%
Total	500	100

Table 1 revealed that consumers of the product are differently distributed. It is observed that there are more male users than female users. As presented in the table the male mobile users are more in number in the conducted survey.

Consumer's age distribution

Age (in Years)	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
10-20	98	19.6
21-30	198	39.6
31-40	96	19.2
41-50	85	17
51-60	23	4.6
Total	500	100

Table-2

Source: Primary Data

In Table 2, it showed that the consumer's age ranges between 10 and 60 years. It could be seen from the distribution that the model age group is between 21-30 with about 39.6% of the total sample. The obvious implication of this finding is that there is dominance of youth in the market for mobile phone.

Consumer's brand preference

Brands	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Nokia	214	42.8
Samsung	132	26.4
Spice	30	6
Blackberry	8	1.6
LG	22	4.4
Motorola	14	2.8
Sony	21	4.2
Ericsson		
Onida	3	0.6
Other (Micromax, Karbon)	56	11.2
Total	500	100

Table-3

Source: Primary Data

The data in the table 3 reveals that the two brands Nokia and Samsung made up more than 65% (69.2) of the brand preference of consumers; where Nokia brand is leading the mobile phone market. The large number of brands highlights the high competitiveness of the industry and the need for concerted efforts by the various companies not only to maintain their market but to increase their market share.

Consumer's reasons for preferring the brand:

Reasons	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Configuration	116	29
Advertisement	55	13.75
Outlook and design	60	15
Price	90	22.5
Availability	40	10
No response	39	9.75
Total	500	100

Table-4

Source: Primary Data

The reasons for brand preference by the consumers depicted by the table – 4 ranges from configuration (29%) to availability (10%). The importance and role of mobile phones configuration in retaining and increasing the company's market is obvious from the result and instructive to the management of the company. Configuration and price difference made up above 50% of the reason for the observed brand preference.

Consumer's Preferences for features of mobile handsets

Features	Preference Rating			Overall Preferences
	1	2	3	
Brand Image	203	191	106	I
Price	197	153	150	II
Stylish Look	185	145	170	III
Camera	179	161	160	IV
Touch Screen	168	159	173	V
Sound	154	171	175	VI
Storage Capacity	139	229	132	VII
Processor	138	249	113	VIII

Table-5

Source: Primary Data

The respondents were asked to give their best three preferences on various features of a mobile phone. In the table the brand image was ranked as No.1 followed by Price at No. 2 and Stylish look at No.3. The least preferred features include Processor at No.8 and Storage capacity at No.7. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents are unaware of these features so they go for branded and trusted mobile phones or mobile phones with good looks.

Consumer’s Using No. of Handsets

No. of Mobile Handsets	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
One	279	55.8
Two	123	24.6
More than two	98	19.6
Total	500	100

Table-6

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 indicates the number of mobile phones owned by the respondents. 55.8% of the respondents own only one mobile handset while 24.6% of the respondents have two mobile handsets. There are only 19.6% of the respondents have more than two mobile phones.

Consumer’s experience in using mobile sets

Years	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
2-5	100	20
6-10	293	58.6
More than 10	107	21.4
Total	500	100

Table-7

Source: Primary Data

From the table-7 it is clear that about 20% of the respondents are using the mobile handset from the last 2-5 years and about 58.6% of the respondents are using the mobile handsets from last 6-10 years and 21.4% of the respondents are using it from more than 10 years.

Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards various mobile phones

Demographics	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied
Age:		
10-20	62	36
21-30	138	60
31-40	69	27
41-50	70	15
51-60	20	03
Education:		
Post Graduation	95	25
Graduation	125	35
Secondary	130	20
Below Secondary	60	10

Brands:		
Nokia	200	14
Samsung	114	18
Spice	20	10
Blackberry	4	4
LG	16	6
Motorola	8	6
Sony Ericsson	17	4
Onida	2	1
Other (Micromax, Karbon)	32	24

Table-8

Source: Primary Data

CONCLUSION

Studying preference and satisfaction is very complex, as consumer behavior, involves not only the economic factors but also the emotional factors. Consumer's preferences changes from time to time basing on various factors. Even the satisfaction levels depend upon enormous factors. Satisfaction is an issue which cannot be determined by the statistics, it is the thing that is related to the feelings and expectations of human being. However, marketers need to study the consumer behavior that helps them for better positioning of their products and develop effective marketing strategies.

As far as satisfaction levels of the respondents were concerned it was seen that there was no significant difference in the satisfaction level of respondents by different age groups. However it was seen that as the age increases the respondent's dissatisfaction towards their mobile phones decreases. This can be attributed to the fact that young customers have more expectations and demands from their mobile phones as compared to older customers.

Consumer's satisfaction through net value delivery is the key for any marketing success. It is right to say that today's delight of the consumers is their tomorrow's loyalty to the

brand. At the same time, this becomes base for tomorrow's expectation from the brand also. The success of any marketing strategy lies in the customer's post-purchase experience associated with the products / services. This study was conducted to investigate the consumer's preference and satisfaction in particular. The findings of the study reflect that advertising and word of mouth publicity are the major source of awareness creation among the mobile phone users.

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