

Research Article

Analysis of Perceptions of Customers of Cellular Phone Users in India: Study with Prepaid Service Customers and Post Paid Customers Demographic Factors

S. Muthumani and R. Saranya

Faculty of Business Administration, Sathyabama University, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

Abstract: The primary objective of the study is to find out and analyze the customer perceptions on cellular phone services in India. Cellular phones are become the part of the life and the various barriers in the obtaining and usage of cellular services are lack of awareness, cost factor, perceptions of the customers on cellular phones etc. In addition the service quality, customer care, market competition brings lot of instability and reliability of the services. In turn it makes further confusion among the users. It paves an opportunity of providing limited services in the selective areas. It leads to a wide gap in the service quality and reliability between the urban and semi urban areas. It gives an opportunity to the researcher to survey on the facts and perceptions of the cellular phone users to find out the real situation and to suggest appropriate suggestions to overcome the issues in the market expansion and to improve the service quality of the cellular phone services in the sample area. To do this, the researcher selects a comparative approach. The data is collected by preparing a structured questionnaire and collected from the cellular phone users in the sample area. The study centered, in comparing the customers perceptions towards cellular phone services provided by the different operators in the states of India. The customers are from both urban and semi-urban places of India. In addition, customers were also classified on the basis of the type of services usage (i.e., post paid or pre paid). The basic parameters used for the purpose of comparing their perceptions are purpose of usage. The study has taken the demographic factors of respondents for analysis.

Keywords: Attitudes, demographic factors, post-paid, pre-paid, telecommunications

INTRODUCTION

Cellular industry in India: The Government of India recognizes that the provision of a world-class telecommunications infrastructure and information is the key to rapid economic and social development of the country. It is critical not only for the development of the Information Technology industry, but also has widespread ramifications on the entire economy of the country. In is also anticipated that going forward, a major part of the Gross Domestic Product of the country would be contributed by this sector. Accordingly, it is of vital importance to the country that there be a comprehensive and forward looking telecommunications policy which creates an enabling framework for development of this industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth in demand for telecom services in India is not limited to basic telephone services. India has witnessed rapid growth in cellular, radio paging; value added services, internet and Global Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) services. The agents of change, as observed from international perspective, have been broadly categorized into

economic structure, competition policy and technology. Economic reforms and liberalization have driven telecom sector through several transmission channels of which these three categories are of major significance. The effective research cannot be accomplished without critically studying what already exists in the form of general literature and specific studies. Therefore, it is considered as an important pre-requisite for actual planning and execution of research project. This helps to make the analysis effectively.

Matthias and Andre (2012) views that, mobile-telephone companies tend to consider prepaid service a poor cousin of monthly bill subscriptions and it is true that prepaid customers generate, on average, only 35% of the revenue that monthly subscribers do. Some mobile operators even talk about getting out of the prepaid business altogether. Research suggests, however, that prepaid customers, when managed properly, can offer a healthy revenue stream whether or not they eventually become monthly subscribers. It was found that when a carrier implements an effective acquisition program, it could increase the profitability of prepaid customers by 40 to 80%. To turn the prepaid segment around, companies must choose their customers more carefully manage the life cycle and clean.

Revathy and Padmavathy (2013) in a research dissertation entitled "A Study on the preference in cellular service provider in the post liberalization Era" stated that the family is a major influence on the purchasing behavior of its members. Though, marketers recognize the family as basis decision making unit, they most frequently examine the attitudes and behavior of one family member, whom they believe to be the major decision marker. Given the substantial number of married women working outside, children and status pressures, marketers must concentrate on the buying roles of each family member. It is thus important for marketers to recognize that household decision roles exist and may be performed by different household members. Thus appealing only to deciders or purchasers may be a narrow and less effective strategy. Marketers must carefully analysis the factors that enter into judgment and decision making and also acquire a clear understanding of which family members are involved in an acquisition decision and appeal to all important parties.

Massoud and Gupta (2013) in their research project entitled "Consumer perception and attitude towards mobile communication"- Mobile phones, mobile internet access and mobile commerce are growing much faster than their fixed counterparts. A projected number of hand-held (mobile) devices will exceed the number of stationary terminals in the world in the next few years. Nevertheless, people are unlikely to buy things using a mobile phone if there is no immediate benefit; they are likely to wait until they get to a PC, with better interface. However, successful e-commerce and solutions do not simply translate into successful mobile solutions by adding a mobile interface. Those m-commerce applications that generate significant revenue will be those specifically developed around the mobile experience; those that understand how the customer interacts with their device, the type of things the customer wants to buy and when they want to buy them. This paper attempts to describe the fast-growing trend for tools to access the internet that will be more popular in the future than the predominant use of personal computers at the present time. A survey was conducted to understand consumer attitudes toward mobile communication and factors that would contribute to adaptation and success of this emerging technology. The outcome of this study could provide a productive strategy for managerial decision-making in this emerging wireless environment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. The primary objective of the study is to find out and analyze the customer perceptions on cellular phone services in India. Cellular phones are become the part of the life and the various barriers in the obtaining and usage of

cellular services are lack of awareness, cost factor, perceptions of the customers on cellular phones etc. In addition the service quality, customer care, market competition brings lot of instability and reliability of the services. In turn it makes further confusion among the users. It paves an opportunity of providing limited services in the selective areas. It leads to a wide gap in the service quality and reliability between the urban and semi urban areas. It gives an opportunity to the researcher to survey on the facts and perceptions of the cellular phone users to find out the real situation and to suggest appropriate suggestions to overcome the issues in the market expansion and to improve the service quality of the cellular phone services in the sample area. To do this, the researcher selects a comparative approach. The data is collected by preparing a structured questionnaire and collected from the cellular phone users in the sample area.

The study centered, in comparing the customers perceptions towards cellular phone services provided by the different operators in the states of India. The customers are from both urban and semi-urban places of India. In addition, customers were also classified on the basis of the type of services usage (i.e., post paid or pre paid). The study is mainly based on primary data which was collected from the 500 customers who are using cellular phone services in various parts of India. The customers were chosen according to the convenience of the researcher. The study areas were selected randomly and respondents were chosen conveniently from Metropolitan cities and second line towns in the states. For the purpose of making a comparative study between urban and semi urban customers, the researcher has metro cities as urban and the remaining second line towns are treated as semi urban. The sample distribution is made equally between urban and semi urban customers. Of the total respondents, 250 respondents were from urban and remaining 250 from semi urban areas. The researcher has also made an attempt to study the comparison between prepaid and post paid service users. Of the total respondents of both urban and semi urban areas, 50% of the customers belong to prepaid service users and the remaining 50% of the customers are using post paid services. Therefore a comparison is made here in this study not only between urban and semi urban customers but also between prepaid and post paid service users. For purpose of this study the demographic factors such as age, gender, income and occupation are taken into account.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of descriptive statistics: Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tools are used to reach out the objective of the study. (38.4%) of the respondents belong to Less than 20 years of age group

and using pre-paid service. Another 40% of the respondents belong to 21-30 and 31-40 years age with 20% in each category. On an average 78.4% of the pre-paid service users belong to less than 40 years age group in the urban area. Majority of the post paid cellular phone users are youth i.e., in the age group of 21-30 years. Where as in case of elders crossed 50 years in urban areas are using mobile phones considerable well when compare to semi-urban. Another significant phenomena observed is the semi-urban youth i.e., less than 20 years age group are using mobiles at higher rate. It indicates the semi-urban potential for the cellular services. In urban areas the mobile phone usage is less in the age group of less than 20 years may be due to restrictions by the schools and colleges, not to use mobile phones.

The gender ratio of the prepaid cellular service users in urban area is recorded at 62.4:37.6 between male and female. In case of semi-urban areas the ratio between male and female is recorded at 79.2:20.8, respectively. It is inferred that the cellular service facilities availability and accessibility to the women is less when compare to male respondents. The usage of mobile phones both in urban and semi urban area is dominated by the men. The women respondents are less and the usage is also less in the sample area. The primary reasons for this may be poor economic empowerment of women in the sample area. This can be superseded with the special awareness camps and discounts to the women in tariff rates. This will enhance the level of awareness and the sustainable growth in the years to come.

The spread of pre-paid cellular service users is recorded as 20% of self employed, 16.8% of students and 16% of professionals are major categories. The spread on the remaining categories of respondents is approximately equal. The primary reason for pre-paid service is highly preferred by the self employed respondents may be due to irregular income. Forty two percent of the sample respondents from the urban are private employees using mobile phones. In semi-urban areas students are the prime customers to the mobile phone services consisting of 25% of the sample. The usage of mobile phones, by the professionals and students in urban areas consists of 12% each. The respondents belongs to the remaining occupations are distributes evenly.

(31.2%) of the respondents belong to Rs. 10001-15000 level of income category and 30.4% of the respondents belong to Rs. 15001-20000 level of income category in urban area. These two categories of people are highly preferred for prepaid cellular services. It is observed that in urban areas the pre paid service users belong to self employment or student community. Respondents having above Rs. 20000 family incomes per month are occupying 65% of the usage of mobile phones in urban areas. In semi-urban majority of the

mobile phone users are in the income range of Rs. 10001-15000 per month. Income plays a major role in the usage of mobile phones.

Results of inferential statistics: There is no significant difference between the urban and semi-urban with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the pre-paid customers is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between urban and semi-urban with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the pre-paid customers. There is no significant difference between the male and female customers with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the pre-paid customers is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between male and female customers with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the pre-paid customers. Based on the mean value the concern for over all importance of cellular phones, overall opinion about cellular phones, overall importance in the selection of service provider, overall usage rating of value added services, overall satisfaction of customer care and overall satisfaction on the service provider is high among the male customers when compare to female customers among the sample. There is no significant difference between the male and female customers with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the post-paid customers is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference between male and female customers with regard to the dimension of perceptions overall importance in the selection of service provider, overall usage rating of value added services, overall satisfaction of service provider on cellular phone services among the post-paid customers. Based on the mean value the concern for overall opinion about cellular phones, overall importance in the selection of service provider, overall usage rating of value added services and overall satisfaction on the service provider is high among the female customers when compare to male customers among the sample.

Its found from analysis as there is no significant difference between the groups with regard to the dimension of perceptions on cellular phone services among the pre-paid customers is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between age groups of customers with regard to the dimension of overall importance of cellular service, overall opinion about cellular phone services, overall importance in the selection of service provider, overall usage rating of value added services, overall satisfaction of customer care services and overall satisfaction on the services provided by the service provider among the pre-paid customers. Based on the mean value the concern for over all importance of

cellular phones, overall opinion about cellular phones is high among the customers belongs to 31-40 years age group. There is no significant difference between the different age groups with regard to the dimension of overall usage rating of value added services on cellular phone services among the post-paid customers is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between age groups of customers with regard to the dimension of overall usage rating of value added services on cellular phone services among the post-paid customers. Based on the mean value the customers belongs to 41-50 years age group are highly concerned for the overall usage rating of value added services on cellular phone among the post paid customers. Through analysis its observed there is no significant difference between the occupations with regard to the dimension of Overall usage rating of value added services, Overall satisfaction of customer care; Overall satisfaction of service provider among the pre-paid users is rejected at 5% level of significance. Based on the mean value Overall usage rating of value added services, Overall satisfaction of customer care, Overall satisfaction of service provider is high among the customers belongs to professional category. There is an association between the occupation and area among the post-paid cellular phone users. Based on the mean value post paid services are highly used by the business men in the semi urban areas and private employees are highly used in the urban areas. It may be due to in semi urban areas the businessmen requires to have a connectivity with suppliers and distribution channel to do his business in a smooth way. In addition other modes of communications are not available to the extent of the requirements.

CONCLUSION

In Indian telecom sector, cellular phone is called as Evergreen industry. Cellular phone services have becomes the order of the day. Technology plays a major role in the success of the service provider. Coverage, economy and flexibility are the primary drivers of the market. The services provided by the operators may not vary to a greater extent. Customer orientation is the need of an hour. The difference between the perceptions of the semi-urban and urban is negligible. It indicates the need for uniform services in the years to come. Cellular phone is a direct communication device with lot of feel good service facilities. The customers going for cellular phone may look into various aspects of it. It may differ in a minor manner. Both urban and semi urban customers are price sensitive and expects reliable service quality at all points of time. It may leads to similarities in the perceptions of the various categories of cellular phone users. To sum up, it is inferred from the above analysis, service quality and customer care is

the two pillars of the cellular phone industry. The success of the sector or an individual service provider depends on the quality of services provided and the after sale customer care services offered at a given point of time. The service providers should recognize the changing needs and design the products accordingly can help in achieving the vision to reality. The benefits ripe out of it can be shared in a mutually beneficial way among the stake holders. The beneficiaries are the service providers, customers, investors and the society at large. This can help in uplifting the standard of living of the economy as a whole. We hope this should happen at the earliest possible time for the benefit of the cellular phone users and to the society at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the age composition observation of the cellular phone users, the most preferred and potential age group for cellular phones is found as below 20 years and youth in both the pre paid and post paid. The schemes designed and developed should be based on the youth interests, which can increase the market share and potential to en cash the market. The special awareness camps and discounts to the women in tariff rates due to low percentage of women are using the mobile phones. This will enhance the level of awareness and the sustainable growth in the years to come. The overall perceptions on the cellular phones among the sample respondents is cell phones are the symbol of youth and love, helps in get connected with others, helps in speedy communication and increases the standard of living by way of comfort and improves the level of knowledge in general. The modern uses of cellular phones are yet to known to the society. The level of awareness on the use of cellular phones in business, banking, telemedicine, crisis control, weather forecast, forming information, preventive medicine and instructions and public safety are to be propagated among the public through appropriate media. It will help in enhancing the positive impact of cellular market and cellular phone services.

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