



Research Article

A STUDY ON BRAND PREFERENCE OF MOBILE PHONE USERS IN CHIDAMBARAM TOWN

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ABSTRACT

Mobile phone markets are one of the most turbulent market environments today due to increased competition and change. Thus, it is of mobile phone users choices between different mobile phone brands. This study aims to address the question by analyzing brand is preferred most by mobile phone users in Chidambaram town while purchasing mobile phones and status and impact of the technical, economical, social and personal criterion by mobile phone users in Chidambaram town to take the decision for choosing and purchasing the branded mobile product further the current satisfaction level on the particular brand owned. To achieve this purpose total sample consists of 250 respondents. The respondents have been selected from mobile recharge centers, mobile phone shops and public places in Chidambaram town. The statistical techniques considered are the entire collected data were analysed by using simple percentage analysis and by chi-square test. The research conclusion from the present study, the small local players like micromax, Karbonn, lava, lemon, spice and a like will have to quickly rethink their product, marketing and service strategy fresh according to the small towns like Chidambaram to put their house in order. Apart from affordable pricing and assured quality of the mobile phones, the mobile company's target audience should be more towards younger generation. They would drive to best 'feather' in cap of mobile market share in small towns like Chidambaram and even India's best mobile market share.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

Strong brand names can have positive effects on consumer perception and preferences. The Indian mobile handset market posted revenues of `35946 crore in the financial year 2013 a 14.7 per cent increase from `31,330 crore in the financial year 2012. The growth was primarily led by the increase in uptake of smart phones by Indian consumers, according to voice and Data Survey of Indian Mobile Handsets Market 2012-2013. The 18th annual survey covered over 30 mobile handset companies (both multi-national and Indian mobile phone firms) doing business in India across categories like feature phones, multimedia phones, enterprise phones as well as smart phones. The biggest upset of the year was the dethroning of Finnish handset maker Nokia from the top spot for over a decade, but the former king of Indian mobile phone market dropped a rank to be placed at number two with 27.2 per cent market share. The company also witnessed a significant drop in revenues (18 per cent to be exact).

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Samsung became the market leader with 31.5 per cent market share. The company's rise in the Indian market is attributed to its rich product portfolio that was able to cater to customer of all budget categories. The company offers handsets in all price ranges, from as low as `1500 to upwards of `4000. The fact the handsets come in varied screen sizes also worked for the company. These two factors helped the company in grabbing customer's attention, besides the product quality and new features. In contrast, Karbonn Mobiles was the only company among the Indian handset players that grew most consistently. In the financial year 2013, Karbonn grew by 73.1 per cent to register revenues of `2297 crore compared to `1327 crore in financial year 2012, in the process improving its ranking to number four from five in the previous year. The rise of smaller local player like Micromax, Karbonn, Lava and Zen is a clear indication that consumers want cheaper feature rich phones. The next phase mobile penetration in the bottom of the pyramid India will be driven by these companies. As the mobile phone market is a typical technology push driven market where products are created ahead of the recognition of existing recognized mobile phone users' needs, mobile phone development is based on consumers' possible future needs and thus companies that best hunch the technologies and services of future will be the leaders in the discipline.

Mobile phone markets are one of the most turbulent market environments today due to increased competition and change. Thus, it is of mobile phone users choices between different mobile phone brands. But what criterion do mobile phone users of the Chidambaram town preferred on brand while purchasing mobile phones?

This study aims to address the above question by analyzing the following research questions.

- Which brand is preferred most by mobile phone users in Chidambaram town while purchasing mobile phones?
- What is the status and impact of the technical, economical, social and personal criterion by mobile phone users in Chidambaram town to take the decision for choosing and purchasing the branded mobile product?
- What is the current satisfaction level on the particular brand owned?

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study on brand preference of mobile phone users in Chidambaram town are as follows:

- To highlight the key players in mobile phone market.
- To study the criterion on brand preference of mobile phone users in Chidambaram town.
- To study the level of satisfaction on mobile phone users in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is mainly based on primary data. The primary data was collected through personal interview schedule from the respondents. The secondary data was collected to seek more information on brand preference of mobile phone users from different sources like books, journals, articles, news paper, unpublished thesis and websites.

Review of Literature

There are 44 reviews has reviewed from the journals, articles, books, unpublished thesis and websites.

Scope of the study

The study covers the aspects pertaining to the opinion of the mobile phone users and those who are going to replace the particular brand of mobile phone in Chidambaram town towards brand awareness, preference and their level of satisfaction. The respondents are restricted to residents of Chidambaram town.

Sample Plan

The total sample consists of 250 respondents. The respondents have been selected from mobile recharge centers, mobile phone shops and public places in Chidambaram town. Because of convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher, convenience sampling method has been adopted.

Statistical Tool

The collected data were properly classified, arranged, coded, segregated, tabulated and summarized into a master table. From the master table, the values were taken into the concerned tables. The entire collected data were then analysed by using simple percentage analysis and by chi-square test.

Period of the Study

Primary data were collected during the month of September 2013 to December 2013.

Hypothesis of the study

The following null hypothesis has been framed by the researcher and it has been tested with chi-square test.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between income and amount spend for purchase of mobile phone

H₂: There is no significant relationship between gender and period of usage of mobile phone by the respondent

Limitation of the Study

Though precaution and vigilance were taken by the researcher to make the study objective and error free, this study is not free from the limitations. The major limitations of the study are:

- As the respondents are were restricted to residents of Chidambaram town the researcher found somewhat difficult to identify the respondents at public places where the research has been conducted. However, due care has been given to ensure the residential status of the respondents.
- Telecommunication net works like BSNL, idea, Aircel, Airtel and so on has not been considered in this study.
- There is no classification has been given by the researcher for smart phones and other variety of mobile phones in this research work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- Out of 250 respondents 145 (58 per cent) were male respondents and rest of them (105) were female respondents.
- Majority of the respondents (106/250) have possessed college level of education. Some of the respondents (42/250) have possessed school level of education. Considerable parts of the respondents (98/250) were college going students.
- Most of the respondents (121/250) were under the age group of 29 to 58. It was also revealed that some of the respondents (109/250) were at the age group of 19 to 28.
- It was interesting to notice that majority of the respondents (112/250) were dependents. Out of the total respondents 53 of them were government employees under non-gazetted rank and six of them were government employees under gazetted rank. Form this study it was also found that some of the respondents (32/250) were professionalist, some of them (24/250) were business people and rest of them (23/250) were private employees.

- From the study it was found that majority of the respondents (112/250) were at non-income group. It is because majority of them were the dependents. Considerable part of the respondents (53/250) were earning from `30, 001 to 40,000 per month. Some of the respondents (16/250) were earning from `20, 001 to ` 30,000 per month. It was also notice that some of the respondents (46/250) were earning above ` 50,000 per month.
- Majority of the respondents (131/250) have owned Samsung mobile handset. Next to Samsung, some of the respondents (49/250) have owned Nokia mobile. Out of the total respondents 23 of them have owned LG mobile phone. The brand Sony Ericson has owned by 12 respondents. The rest of the respondents that is 14 per cent have owned other brands such as motorola, micromax, lava, G five, G seven, Karbonn, Lemon, spice, Calkon, Videocon, yxtel and wincomm.
- Majority of the respondents (127/250) that is 58.80 per cent have spent less than ` 5,000 for the purchase of their mobile handset. Out of the total respondents 83 of them that are 33.20 per cent have spent from ` 5,001 to ` 10,000 for the purchase of their mobile handset. It is interesting to notice that none of them have spent more than ` 30,000 for the purchase of mobile phone in the study area.
- From the study it was found that the following factors have been opined as 'very important' by the respondents. They were advertisement (210/250), appearance (235/250), price (240/210) mobile features (230/250), quality (250/250) brand image (186/250), service availability (192/250) and friends recommendation (39/280).
- From the study it was also found that the following factors have been opined as 'important' by the respondents at their brand preference. They were advertisement (35/250), appearance (15/250), price (10/250), mobile features (12/250), brand image (44/250) service availability (46/250) and friend's recommendation (203/250).
- Most of the respondents (114/250) that is 45.60 per cent are using the mobile handset from the time duration period of two years to four years. Only few of the respondents (12/250) that is 4.80 per cent are using the mobile handset what they are using at present with the usage period of less than one year.
- Majority of the respondents (104/250) that is 41.60 per cent have opined that they were in the mind set to replace their mobile handset from what they are using at present after the one year but within two years of usage. Some of the respondents (42/250) that is 16.80 per cent have opined that they were in the mind set to replace their mobile handset only after four years of usage.
- From this study it was found that the entire sample respondents (250) was having hands free is one of their accessories. Some of them (62/250) that is 24.80 per cent were using USB data cable. Only few of them (47/250) that is 18.80 per cent were using Blue tooth Device. It is significant to notice that the entire sample respondents (250/250) were using memory card as one of their accessories.
- From this study it is significant to notice that only very few of the respondents (less than five per cent) have used the mobile features such as e-mail, mobile banking, online payment and voice chatting. This is because unawareness of these features by the respondents and non availability of these features at respondents mobile handset.
- From this study it was found that the following features have been opined by the respondents as "Highly satisfied". They are, call diversion (43/43), silent mode (247/247), vibration mode (187/187), Alarm (241/247), time (250/250), mobile banking (08/08), online payment (08/08) and voice chatting (04/04). It is significant to notice that out of 102 respondents, most of them that is 69 respondents have opined that 'highly dissatisfied' with Wi-Fi features at their mobile handset. Also it is significant to notice that out of 96 respondents, most of the respondents that is 89 respondents have opined that they were 'Dissatisfied' with Blue tooth features at their mobile handset.
- From this study it was found that majority of the respondents (132/250) have opined to replace their handset and go for new purchase. Out of this 132 respondents 102 of the respondents have opined to prefer the same brand what they are using at present but opined to go for new purchase with latest model. The rest of the respondents (30/132) have opined to prefer other brands of mobile handsets from what they are using at present.
- From this study it was found and significant to notice that out of 98 respondents those who were possessing the brand 'samsung' 97 of them have opined to continue with the same brand but with latest model. Also it is significant to notice that out of 12 respondents those who were possessing the brand 'Nokia', majority of them that is nine of them have opined to prefer other brands of mobile phones. The entire respondents those who were using Motorola micromax, karbonn, Videocon, Yxtel and wincomm have opined to prefer other brands of mobile handsets from what they are using at present.
- Out of 30 respondents those who were in the mind set to replace from their existing mobile brand to other mobile brands, 26 of them that is 86.67 percent preferred the brand 'Samsung', two of them preferred the brand 'Apple', one preferred the brand HTC and the rest of one preferred the brand 'Nokia'.
- From this study it was found the most of the respondents (21/30) that is 70.00 percent were willing to spend ` 10,001 to ` 20,000 at their next purchase (Replacement of existing handset). It is significant to notice that only two of the respondents were willing to spend more than ` 40,000 for their mobile handset at their next purchase.
- From this study it was found that and significant to notice that the entire respondents that is 30 have opined the factors such as advertisement, appearance, desired features, quality and brand image will be the most influencing factors at their next purchase of mobile phone. It is also significant to notice that some of the respondents (9/30) have opined 'price' will be the influencing factor of their next purchase of mobile handset.

Findings Related to Hypothesis

- The null hypothesis has been tested with chi-square test at the degree of freedom three with five percent level of significance. As the calculated value (4.68) is less than the table value (7.81). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between

gender and period of usage of mobile handsets by the respondents

- The null hypothesis has been tested with chi-square test at the degree of freedom 18 with five per cent level of significance. As the calculated value (12.89) is greater than that of table value (28.90). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationships between income and amount spent for purchase of mobile handset by the respondents

Suggestions

- In the study area, the mobile phone features such as e-mail, mobile banking, online payment and voice chatting was used by the respondents very limited only. This is because of non availability of these features at the respondents' mobile handset. Hence, the mobile phone companies should try to extend these features at affordable prices at their mobile handsets.
- As most of the respondents have opined that they had dissatisfied with Wi-Fi connectivity and Bluetooth option, hence, the manufactures should pay attention to redress these problems on Wi-Fi connectivity and Bluetooth features.
- In the study area none of the respondents have opined to prefer the small players like Motorola, micromax, karbonn, Videocon and a like at their repurchase. In order to retain the customers these mobile phone companies may extend the guarantee and warranty period with free of cost.
- Most of the respondents have suggested that they are in need of mobile phone tracker feature. But most of the mobile phone companies introduced even at their latest models without this feature. They should consider on this feature at their next model.

Conclusion

It is arrived at a conclusion from the present study, it is analysed that the small local players like micromax, Karbonn, lava, lemon, spice and a like will have to quickly rethink their product, marketing and service strategy fresh according to the small towns like Chidambaram to put their house in order. Apart from affordable pricing and assured quality of the mobile phones, the mobile company's target audience should be more towards younger generation. They would drive to best 'feather' in cap of mobile market share in small towns like Chidambaram and even India's best mobile market share.

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