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CONSUMER PREFERENCES AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS VARIOUS MOBILE PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VODAFONE AT THIRUTHURAIPOondi TOWN

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ABSTRACT

In the era of information explosion, people are to be provided with quick and timely access to information. Indian Telecom industry is one of the fastest growing telecom markets in the world. In telecom industry, service providers are the main drivers; whereas equipment manufacturers are witnessing growth. In this light, the present study deals with consumer preferences and their satisfaction level towards the mobile phone service providers available in Thiruthuraiipoondi town. The present study conducted on 150 mobile phone users of various mobile phone service providers such as Vodafone, Airtel, BSNL, Reliance, Idea, Tata Indicom and few other players. The results derived from the study indicate that the factor that induces the consumers to buy a particular mobile phone operator is call tariffs followed by network coverage and brand image. The study also highlights that majority of respondents are satisfied with the value added services offered by their mobile phone service providers. The findings derived from the study will be helpful for mobile phone service providers in deciding and implementing their sales strategy for the promotion of mobile phone services.

KEYWORDS

vodafone, telecom, satisfaction, mobile phone.

1. INTRODUCTION

Exchange of information becomes the necessity of life to a common man. In the modern world an individual tends to communicate anything to everything right from the place where he/she stands. Even while riding vehicle he / she wants communicate within a fraction of second at quick speed with clear voice, without any disturbance. Like line crossing, out of order, etc. most of which lack in the connection given by the department of telecommunication. Mobile phones emerge as a boon quench such a thirst, by providing facilities, which a common man cannot imagine. Though cell phone industry has its origin in the recent past and the growth has been excellent. Consumer feedback is providing the market reflections to the marketer. This enables them to gain awareness about their market performance, consumer preference and their satisfaction level towards the services offered by them. The study at hand will throw light on the customer satisfaction status on various service offerings offered by different mobile phone service providers.

2. CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Consumer preferences is used primarily to mean to select an option that has the greatest anticipated value among a number of options by the consumer in order to satisfy his/her needs or desires. Preferences indicate choices among neutral or more valued options available. The preference of the consumer is the result of their behaviour they show during searching, purchasing and disposing the products.

2.1 CONSUMER SATISFACTION

Every human being is a consumer of different produces. If there is no consumer, there is no business. Therefore, consumer satisfaction is very important to every business person. The consumer satisfaction after purchase depends on the product performance in relation to his/her expectations.

Philip Kotler (2008) observed that satisfaction is a person's feelings of pressure or disappointment resulting from product's perceived performance (outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. Consumer satisfaction is the level of a person's felt state resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (outcome) in relation to the person's difference between perceived performance and expectations. If the product's performance exceeds expectation, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the products performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied.

Consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the feeling derived by the consumer when he compares the product's actual performance with the performance that he expects out of it. Consumers make their expectations from the service quality, service, delivery, communications, past experiences and references. These all are to be judged correctly by the management so that their perceptions match with consumer expectations. If any of these factors are wrongly interpreted, then the expected level of consumer satisfaction cannot be reached.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The references for the literature review used for the problem in hand are as follows:

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 is an important factor 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.

Haque et 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.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives for the research problem in hand are as follows:

1. To know about the awareness level of consumers regarding their mobile phone service provider.
2. To ascertain the attributes that consumer prefers in selecting a particular mobile phone service provider.
3. To study the consumers' satisfaction level towards various services offered by mobile phone service providers.
4. To assess the problems faced by the mobile phone users regarding their respective mobile phone service providers.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research work is limited to study the consumer preferences and satisfaction towards various mobile phone service providers in Thiruthuraiipoondi town. The research design used for the research problem in hand is exploratory research which is also termed as formulative research. The major emphasis in exploratory research is given on the discovery of ideas and insights of the research problem. The sample design adopted for the research problem in hand is convenience random sampling. The sample size for the study is 250. The sample unit of the study included different occupation, age, income and educational background.

For the study in hand, both the primary and secondary data is collected. The primary data for the study is collected directly from target respondents through structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The secondary data for the study is collected from different sources such as technical and trade journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, internet, periodicals, books, reports, publications of associations related to mobile phone service providers.

6. ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF AGE

S.No	Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 20 yrs	13	18
2.	21yrs - 30yrs	34	45
3.	31yrs - 40yrs	21	28
4.	Above 40 yrs	07	09
	Total	75	100

Source: primary data

Inference

The above table 1 shows that 45% of the cell phones users are in the age group of 21-30 years, 28% of the respondents are in the age group of 31-40 years, 18% of the respondents are in the age group of below 20 years and only 9% of the respondents are in the age group of above 40 years. This indicate that the maximum of the cellphone users belongs to middle and old age people.

FIGURE 1: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF AGE

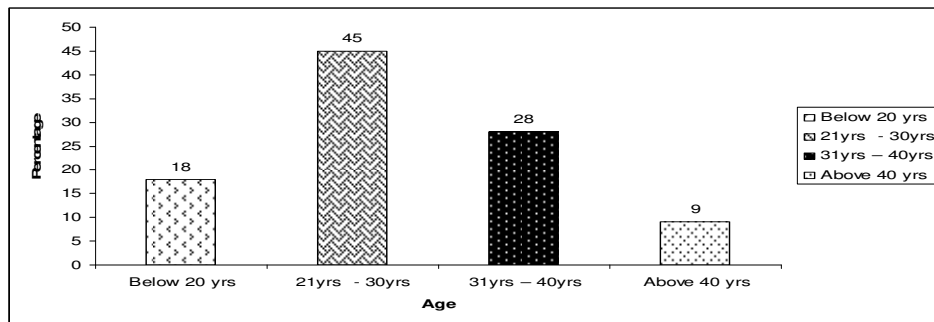


TABLE 2: GENERAL NETWORK COVERAGE IN VODAFONE

S. No	Network coverage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Very Good	25	33
2.	Fair	24	32
3.	Bad	20	27
4.	Very Bad	06	08
	Total	75	100

Source: primary data

Inference

The above table (3.6) indicates 33% of the respondents feel that the general network coverage in Vodafone is very good, whereas 32% of the respondents feel that it is fair, 27% of the respondents feel that the coverage is bad and 8% feel very bad about net work connection. As a whole vodafone provides a good network connection with no hindrances.

FIGURE 2: GENERAL NETWORK COVERAGE IN VODAFONE

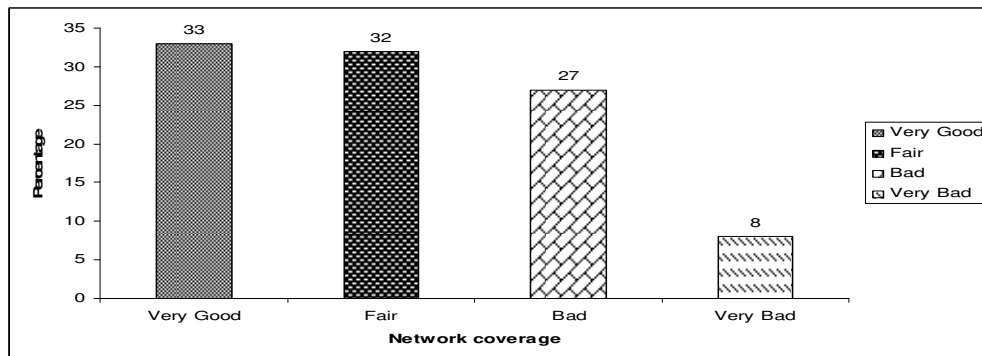


TABLE 3: INFORMATION REGARDING OFFERS IN VODAFONE

S. No	Information regarding offer in Vodafone	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Through SMS from the company	35	47
2.	Through Phone Calls from the company	19	25
3.	Through Television Ads	16	21
4.	Friends and relatives	05	07
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

Inference

The above table indicates 47% of the respondents say that they receive information through SMS from the company, 25% of the respondents receive offer information through phone calls from the company, 21% of them receive from friends and relative and only 7% of them say that they receive information through television advertisements.

FIGURE 3: INFORMATION REGARDING OFFERS IN VODAFONE

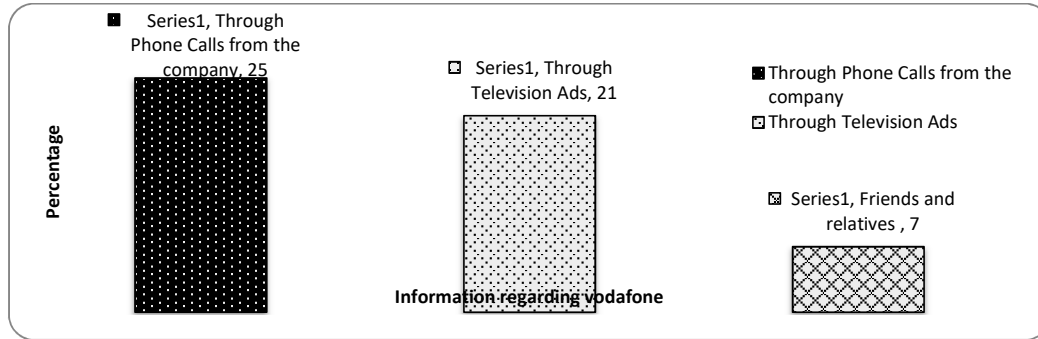


TABLE 4: SATISFACTION DERIVED FROM THE NETWORK

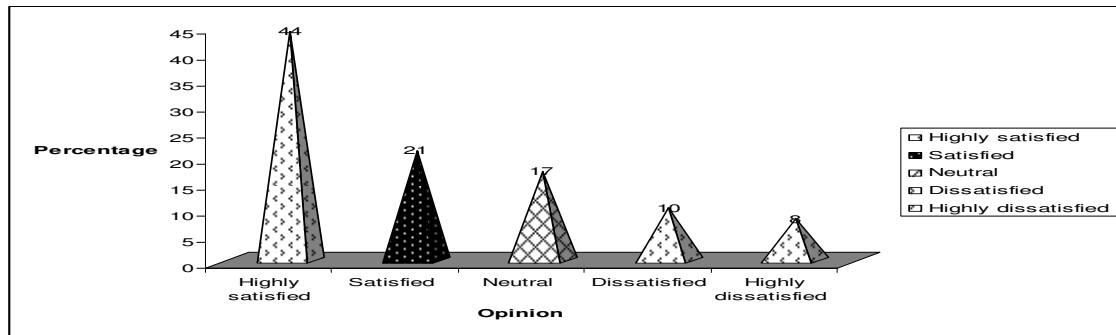
S. No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Highly satisfied	33	44
2.	Satisfied	16	21
3.	Neutral	13	17
4.	Dissatisfied	07	10
5.	Highly dissatisfied	06	08
	Total	75	100

Source: primary data

Inference

The above (4) table shows that 44% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the network connection in the Vodafone, 21% are satisfied, 17% are neutral, 10% of the respondents are dissatisfied and only 8% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied.

FIGURE 4: SATISFACTION DERIVED FROM THE NETWORK



7. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher presents his findings, suggestions and conclusion borne out to this study.

7.1 FINDINGS

The above data analysis is interpreted that majority of the respondents (45%) are in the age group of 21-30 years and only 9% of the people in the age group of 40 years use cell phone, 65% of the respondents are male, Maximum 21% of the respondents are private employees and students. All people of various category use the cell phone uniformly, 33% of the respondents are of good opinion about the general network coverage in Vodafone and only few are 9% of satisfied with network coverage. As a whole Vodafone provides a good network connection with no hindrance, 47% of the respondents received information from SMS and phone call from company for the offers it made, 32% of the respondents are of the opinion that the Vodafone call rates are low and affordable by all, 33% use booster pack and rate cutter services of the provider people use all the services offered by the provider then and there uniformly.

In further, 60% of the respondents use prepaid network in the Vodafone service due to its advantageous features, 44% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the network connection of the Vodafone. Nowadays Vodafone provides a good and satisfied network coverage.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS

Vodafone has to promote their facilities offered in a wide manner, the service provider must provide good basic training to their staff in-order to gain more customers and retain old customers, the company must maintain a good relationship with the customers and try to satisfy their needs of every individual at affordable cost and in time, Priority should be given by the service providers to those facilities that customers of various categories lack and desire with that of the competitors, the Vodafone should expand their network coverage in outer areas for non-stop connectivity and customer relationship.

7.3 CONCLUSION

Telecommunication is the assisted transmission over a distance for the purpose of communication. In earlier times, this may have involved the use of smoke signals, drums, semaphore, flags or heliograph. In this dynamic world, keeping in track with the environment changes and needs a number of techniques are being introduced and also likely to be introduced. One such improved technology is cellular services in the field of communication. The improved and added features being introduced frequently in mobile phones indicating the extent of demand felt by the people and the efforts taken by the service providers in fulfilling them. Based on the study undertaken it is clear that cell phones today have become a basic necessity of life especially for the business and official people. This project report shows that the Vodafone is good at providing the latest techniques and facilities to their customers. This is the study regarding customer satisfaction and customer relationship management towards Vodafone which concludes that Vodafone is rated very good by their customers.

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