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A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS MOBILE VALUE ADDED SERVICES: A HOLISTIC PERCEPTIVE

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ABSTRACT

A research study was conducted with an objective to understand consumer perception towards mobile value added services. Collected data was analyzed. In this article researcher highlights the entire relationship with in the demographic variables of consumers in their perception towards Mobile Value Added Services. The outcome of this research provides diagnostic insight into how different demographic variables influences consumer behavior towards Mobile Value Added Services.

KEYWORDS

consumer buying behavior, consumer perception, demographic variables, mobile value added services.

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of mobile telecommunication technology and wireless network, new technologies and applications are emerging daily. In the meantime, the telecom industry has become highly competitive market. Driven by various policy initiatives the Indian telecom sector witnessed a complete transformation in the last decade. The Indian telecom industry has proved to be the fastest growing in the world and is currently the second largest globally by subscriber base.

The year 2009 was a significant year for the telecommunication industry. Several events took place during that year which changed the entire landscape of the industry and propelled it into a phase of tremendous growth and was also characterized by a continuing declining trend in Average Revenue Per User (ARPU). It was the beginning of stiff tariff war which resulted in falling ARPU's, even as the numbers of subscribers on the rise. It was further fuelled by the new entrants in to the market who introduced innovative tariff plans in order to attract subscribers resulting in a intensified war with each operator trying to outdo the other.

In order to increase average ARPU's mobile service providers introduced mobile value added services like games, ringtones, apps etc. some of these value added services are provided by, mobile service provider and other by third party generators.

The following demographic variables are considered for this study

1. Mobile service provider
2. Gender
3. Period of technology Usage
4. Type of plan and
5. Monthly expenditure

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rekha Jain (1993) reviewed the policy changes in the Indian Telecom Sector during the initial stages of post liberalization. The author explained that in response to the business needs of faster, cheaper, and more varied modes of communication, the telecommunication sector in many countries had undergone rapid technological and structural changes.

Athreya (1996) described about the significant changes in the Indian Telecommunications sector during the NTP 1993. He identified three phases of changes. First, there was a policy vacuum almost up to 1990. Second, there was a shift in telecommunication policy brought about by a paradigm shift in government economic policy. Third, difficulties were experienced in implementing the new policy.

Jain (2001) explained that spectrum auctions had been used with significant success in many developed countries. He analyzed that while India was one of the early adopters of spectrum auctions, its success in service provision had been low.

A study had done by Heinonen & Strandvik (2003) Showed that mobile channels are perceived to be more personal than traditional and e-mail channels. Li et al (2002) discusses how negative reactions like irritation arise through intrusion Advertising. The channel influences consumer responsiveness to marketing Communication by being perceived as either disturbing or acceptable. If the consumer considers marketing communication via a channel as disturbing it May negatively affect the attention to and perception of the message. In contrast, the Channel may also enhance the acceptance of the marketing communication if is Perceived as appropriate for the specific marketing communication. Also, some consumers may perceive the channels as neutral. i.e., it is neither disturbing nor accepted.

Despite substantial marketing potential, research on mobile Marketing in general and advertising in particular through its most successful application, short message service (SMS) is still embryonic. In a comprehensive survey concerning consumers experiences of direct marketing channels in Finland it was found that consumers perceived direct marketing channels differently compared to each other. (Finish Marketing Association, 2009). The experiences of mail Order, internet and e-mail experiences were more positive compared to other direct Market channels such as tele-marketing and door-to-door sales. 80% of the Respondents had positive experiences of mail order, 77% had positive experiences of internet and e-mail s marketing channels and the corresponding number for SMS. For

tele-marketing and door-to-door sales the number of positive consumers was down to 30% and 25% respectively. Concerning satisfaction with information Received, there seemed to be differences between channels. The study also indicated those consumers have considerable less experience of SMS messages compared to Mail order, internet and email.

New media in the digital Economy have created potentially powerful tools for direct and interactive marketing. Traditional marketing communication Strategies have been based on the interruption logic (Godin 1999) where the Consumer is forced to momentarily pay attention. Permission marketing was introduced as a new managerial approach in marketing communication. It has been argued that firms benefit from getting consumers permission to be contacted (Mari nova, Murphy and Massey 2002). Permission from the consumer would resolve the difficulties to get access to the consumer. Permission is, however, not necessarily a guarantee that the consumer pays attention; it is only a door Opener and gives an indication of the consumer’s potential interest areas.

We believe that by using the information retrieval and filtering Capabilities of mobile agents and location information about the user, there exists a good opportunity for value added services to be provided to the end Users. This also brings about a new way for cellular phone service providers to Achieve competitive advantage by competing not only on the basis of price and Packaging, but also on the basis of the set of value-added services that they provide To their clients. In order to overcome the input/output limitations brought about by Mobile devices, the system should be free of user’s intervention. To that end, It is suggested to use mobile agents for provisioning context-awareness in the project active map in which they took advantage of the location concept to define the Context of people, object and the changes that occur to them. Day and Abowd Stated that a system is context-aware it uses context to provide relevant information and services to user where relevancy depends on user’s task.

Krishnamurthy (2001) also proposes a conceptual framework for Managing on line advertising using the permission marketing approach. Permission Marketing requires the consumer to participate in the programme by giving the permission and the information for continuing the relationship. The interest in this Participation arises from the balance of benefits (message relevance and monetary benefits) and costs (personal information, message processing costs, privacy costs) For consumers. One of the main challenges and opportunities for mobile marketing Companies are also to understand and respect the personal nature of usage of mobile phones. The key is to use interactive wireless media to provide customers with time And location sensitive, personalized information that promotes goods, services and ideas thereby generating value for all stakeholders. The mobile marketing relevance can be influenced by the contextualization of advertising messages. Barwise & Strong take up the flexibility and time based nature but also the fact that the small screens restrict the length of the message. Barnes (2002) stresses the interactive nature of mobile marketing and the ability to use contextual information to target The messages to individual receivers, in other words to personalize the message. Location aware advertising messages are creating five to ten times higher click through rates compared to traditional internet advertising messages.

Robert Gee (2008), highlighted that organizations must understand what drives both value and delight for their customers. Hyunchul Ahna et al (2011) points out that as the competition between mobile telecom operators become severe; it becomes critical for operators to diversify their business areas. Especially, the mobile operators are turning from traditional voice communication to mobile value-added services (VAS), which are new services to generate more average revenue per user (ARPU). That means, cross- selling is critical for mobile telecom operators to expand their revenues and profits. In this study, the authors propose a customer classification model, which may be used for facilitating cross-selling in a mobile telecom market. This model uses the cumulated data on the existing customers including their demographic data and the patterns for using old products or services to find new products and services with high sales potential.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and understand how different demographic variables impact consumer perception towards mobile value added services.
2. To know the relationship between demographic variables and their impact on consumer behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to understand consumer perception towards mobile value added services with special reference to Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh. This study is based on primary data through well structured questionnaire. The relevant secondary data have been collected from various journals magazines groups and websites.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size is 511 and data were collected from student who are in the age group 18 to 25.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

Simple percentages, and Chi – Square tests using SPSS(Statistical Package for Social Sciences)

SAMPLING METHOD

Convenient Sampling

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section covers chi-square analysis using Pearsons chi-square test (also called as test of independence). The Pearsons chi-square used to ask questions about two nominal variables, and it can be used to determine whether two nominal variables are associated in some manner. The variables chosen are type of plan, period of tech usage, gender, monthly expenditure, choice of service provider.

1. Relationship between service provider choice and type of plan

A chi square test was administered to further substantiate the association of type of plant and service provider choice the results are as follows.

TABLE 1: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.927 ^a	8	.348
Likelihood Ratio	9.607	8	.294
Linear-by-Linear Association	.744	1	.388
N of Valid Cases	511		

The Chi-square test shows $\chi^2(N=511) = 8.927$, $p=0.348$. Since p-value greater than test significance value of 0.05, null hypothesis is accepted. Thus the study concludes that at 95% confidence level, there is no association between type of plan and service provider choice in MVAS.

2. Relationship between service provider choice and period of tech usage

TABLE 2

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	53.598 ^a	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.776	24	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.212	1	.137
N of Valid Cases	511		

3. Relationship between service provider and gender

TABLE 3

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.767 ^a	8	.001
Likelihood Ratio	30.959	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.358	1	.550
N of Valid Cases	511		

4. Relationship between service provider choice and monthly expenditure

TABLE 4

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.632 ^a	32	.024
Likelihood Ratio	56.337	32	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	.403	1	.525
N of Valid Cases	511		

5. Relationship between gender and monthly expenditure

TABLE 5

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.876 ^a	4	.300
Likelihood Ratio	5.210	4	.266
Linear-by-Linear Association	.916	1	.339
N of Valid Cases	511		

SUMMARY

This research started with an investigation of associations among the demographic variables. The study found that there is no association between gender and monthly expenditure and type of plan in MVAS. It was concluded that both males and females are choosing similar types of plan and are spending equivalent proportion of money on MVAS. The research also found no association between service provider and type of plan. The reason for this is that telecom is a regulated market and all the service providers have moreover similar plans. Similarly, no association was found between gender and type of plan as discussed above. Another interesting finding was that there is no association between period of technology usage and monthly expenditure. Period of technology usage describes the adoption of technology and it was interesting to find that technology adoption does not ensure increase or decrease of expenditure but it only ensures efficient use of that expenditure.

On the other hand the study found significant association between choice of service providers and technology usage, gender and monthly expenditure. It was interesting to find that when it comes to gender, males and females are choosing service providers differently. Similarly technology diffusion and monthly expenditure was also influencing the choice of the customers when it comes to service providers. Likewise an association was found between gender and period of technology usage, which suggests that the rate of technology adoption is different between males and females. Correspondingly an association was found between service plan and period of technology usage and monthly expenditure.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was conducted in rural markets of Prakasam district. It would be useful to include other districts and states in a future study and further investigation of the relationship between service quality dimensions and cultural dimensions may be undertaken, especially given that India is a vast country with a population of more than 1.2 billion (approx.), 117 officially recognized languages, 28 states and 7 union territories.

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