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CELLULAR PHONES: THE HUB OF MODERN COMMUNICATION - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the sender. The information technology has been successful in building a super high way for communication and people resort to more advanced communication strategies like fax, e-mail, and cellular phones. Telecommunication companies talk of their customers being their most important asset, just like companies in other business domains. But this is rarely reflected in a company's strategy operations. The customer is the theme of all business functions. The purpose of business is to create and retain customers. The customers should be put at the center of all business activities, cutting across function and hierarchical boundaries. Customer satisfaction is a must in business. Satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product perceived or a performance in relation to his or her expectations. The customers of telecom service like cellular telephony are moving ahead with times and have started carrying cellular services just like daily households.

KEYWORDS

Cellular phones, modern communication.

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a vital role in creating, building, developing relationships and business values. Communication service is growing by 20 to 40 per cent every year. India is the world's fastest growing wireless market with 752 million cellular phone subscribers as on February 2011. It is also the second largest telecommunication network in the world in terms of number of wireless connections next to China. As the fastest growing telecommunications industry in the world it is projected that India will have 1.159 billion cellular phone subscribers by 2013. Cellular phone services have achieved great commercial success, because the users recognise that the cellular phone access can improve productivity and enhance safety. Increase in the demand and the poor quality of existing telecommunication services have led the cellular phone service providers to find out ways to improve the quality of service and to support more users in their systems.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cellular phone is a mass media channel. The popular companies are competing to introduce new range of cellular phones each and everyday. Cellular phones are now regarded as a basic necessity by most of the people and they provide a means to achieve a level of freedom and convenience to communicate with others from anywhere. Cellular phone is one of the greatest innovations in the telecom sector and the current world cannot be imagined without communication technology.

Hence, the study is made to evaluate attitude of the customers towards cellular phone services rendered by the service providers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Cellular phones are so common now that they hardly attract one's attention. People have started understanding the value, convenience and ease of owning a cellular phone. Rapid growth and competition among the handset companies and service providers have decreased the rates for cellular handset as well as service providers.

The present study is confined to study the attitude of consumers towards cellular phone services.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are

- To measure the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards cell phone services.
- To examine the socio economic profile and level of satisfaction.
- To analyse the factors influencing the purchase of cellular phone.
- To offer suitable suggestions on the basis of findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from 250 cellular phone users through a well structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique has been adopted for the selection of 250 respondents and 15 dealers. The secondary data has been collected from various standard text books, journals, magazines, newspapers and websites.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

After completing the collection of primary and secondary data, the collected data has been properly tabulated. The tabulated data has been properly analysed by using the statistical tools viz., Percentage analysis, Ranking method and Chi-square test.

ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK

The level of satisfaction has been classified into three categories namely low, medium and high for analytical purpose. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation have been used to determine the level of satisfaction, which is compared with socio economic profile of the cellular phone users. If the score values are greater

than $\bar{X} + S.D.$ it has been taken as high level of satisfaction. If the score values are less than $\bar{X} - S.D.$, it has been classified as low level of satisfaction. If the score values lie between $\bar{X} + S.D.$, and $\bar{X} - S.D.$, it is classified under medium level of satisfaction.

Here \bar{X} - Arithmetic mean and
 S.D. - Standard Deviation

In order to analyse the relationship between respondents' socio economic variables and their level of satisfaction, chi square test has been employed.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

Where,

O = Observed frequency

r = number of rows

E = Expected frequency

c = number of columns

The calculated value of chi square test is compared with the table value of chi square test at 5 per cent level of significance. If the calculated value of chi square test is more than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected or otherwise it is accepted.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The level of satisfaction is measured at three levels viz., high, medium and low level. The respondents who scored 57 and above come under high level of satisfaction. When the score of the respondents fall between 57 and 45, they are said to have medium level of satisfaction. If the score obtained is 45 and below, it is understood that the respondents have low level of satisfaction.

TABLE 1: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High	63	25.20
Medium	132	52.80
Low	55	22.00
Total	250	100

Source :Primary data

Table 1 explains that out of 250 respondents, 132 (52.8%) have medium level of satisfaction, 63 (25.2%) have high level of satisfaction and 55 (22%) have low level of satisfaction.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO ECONOMIC VARIABLES AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

In this section, an attempt is made to analyse the relationship between customers' socio economic variables and their level of satisfaction by using chi-square test.

TABLE 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO ECONOMIC VARIABLES AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

Socio economic variables	Level of Satisfaction			Chi square test results	
	High	Medium	Low		
Gender	Female	32 (27.59)	53 (45.69)	31 (26.72)	Not significant
Age (in years)	Below 20	16(24.24)	33(50.00)	17(25.76)	Significant
	20-40	31(27.68)	47(41.96)	34(30.36)	
	40-60	6(14.63)	32(78.05)	3(7.32)	
	Above 60	10(32.26)	20(64.51)	1(3.23)	
Education	School level	18(21.18)	46(54.12)	21(24.70)	Significant
	College level	24(21.05)	68(59.65)	22(19.30)	
	Others	21(41.18)	18(35.29)	12(23.53)	
Occupation	Student	13(25.00)	20(38.46)	19(36.54)	Significant
	Home maker	13(20.00)	34(52.31)	18(27.69)	
	Businessman	5(12.82)	27(69.23)	7(17.95)	
	Employer	12(28.57)	25(59.53)	5(11.90)	
	Others	20(38.46)	26(50.00)	6(11.54)	
Marital status	Married	31(24.22)	59(46.09)	38(29.69)	Significant
	Unmarried	32(26.23)	73(59.84)	17(13.93)	
Monthly income (in Rs.)	Below 5000	3(18.75)	8(50.00)	5 (31.25)	Significant
	5000-10000	38(27.54)	83(60.14)	17(12.32)	
	10000-15000	14(29.17)	21(43.75)	13(27.08)	
	15000-20000	5(31.25)	9(56.25)	2(12.50)	
	Above 20000	3(9.38)	11(34.37)	18(56.25)	

Source: Primary data

By applying chi-square test, there is no significant relationship between gender and level of satisfaction. There exist relationships between age, education, occupation, marital status, monthly income with level of satisfaction.

REASONS FOR USING CELLULAR PHONE

Now-a-days, cellular phones have become necessity for many people. They are used for several reasons like cheap to communicate, status symbol, business usage, touch with friends and relatives. Table 3 lists the reasons for using cellular phones as follows

TABLE 3: REASONS FOR USING CELLULAR PHONE

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Cheap to communicate	74	29.60
Status symbol	16	6.40
Business usage	37	14.80
Touch with friends and relatives	106	42.40
Others	17	6.80
Total	250	100

Source : Primary data

It is clear that out of 250 respondents, 106 (42.4%) of the respondents use cellular phones to keep in touch with friends and relatives. 74(29.6%) of the respondents use them for economical communication. 37(14.8%) of the respondents use the cellular phones for business whereas 17 (6.8%) respondents use for other purposes. It is found that 16(6.4%) respondents use cellular phones to maintain their status.

BRAND NAME

There are many varieties of handsets available in the market. Table 4 shows the brands name of the handsets used by the respondents.

TABLE 4: BRAND NAME

Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Nokia	131	52.40
Sony Ericsson	47	18.80
LG	15	6.00
Samsung	16	6.40
Videcon	8	3.20
Tata Indicom	17	6.80
Others	16	6.40
Total	250	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 250 respondents, 131(52.4%) respondents use Nokia, 47(18.8%) respondents use Sony Ericsson and 17 (6.8%) respondents use Tata Indicom. 16(6.4%) respondents use Samsung, 16(6.4%) respondents use various others brands of cellular phones (i.e., Korean mobiles, G' Five etc.), 15 (6%) respondents use LG, and 8 (3.2%) respondents use Videcon.

NAME OF THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are several service providers. The customer selects the service provider by their schemes. Table 5 presents the details about the service providers.

TABLE 5: SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service Providers	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Aircel	36	14.40
Airtel	71	28.40
Reliance	20	8.00
BSNL	37	14.80
Tata Docomo	42	16.80
Vodafone	22	8.80
Idea	11	4.40
Uninor	9	3.60
Others	2	0.80
Total	250	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 250 respondents, 71(28.4%) respondents use Airtel, 42 (16.8%) respondents use Tata Docomo, 37 (14.8%) respondents use BSNL, 36 (14.4%) respondents use Aircel, 22 (8.8%) respondents use Vodafone, 20 (8%) respondents use Reliance, 11 (4.4%) respondents use Idea, 9 (3.6%) respondents use Uninor, and 2 (0.8%) respondents use other service providers.

NATURE OF PLAN IN SIMCARD

The simcard is available on two plans such as postpaid and prepaid. Table 6 shows the nature of plan adopted by the respondents.

TABLE 6: NATURE OF PLAN IN SIMCARD

Simcard Plan	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Postpaid	27	10.80
Prepaid	223	89.20
Total	250	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 250 respondents, 223 (89.2%) respondents use prepaid simcard and 27 (10.8%) respondents use postpaid simcard.

AMOUNT OF RECHARGE PER TIME (in ₹)

The cellular phone users recharge based on their need and their financial position. Table 7 shows the amount of recharge per time.

TABLE 7: AMOUNT OF RECHARGE PER TIME

Amount (in ₹)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 100	88	39.46
100-200	69	30.94
200-300	42	18.53
300-400	9	4.04
Above 400	15	6.73
Total	223	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table 7 that out of 223 respondents, 88 (39.94%) respondents recharge less than ` 100. 69 (30.94%) respondents recharge around ` 100 - ` 200, 42(18.53%) respondents recharge for an amount of ` 200- ` 300, 15 (6.73%) respondents recharge more than ` 400, and 9 (4.04%) respondents' recharging amount is roughly ` 300 - ` 400 for their cellular phones.

SCHEMES OF RECHARGE

There are several schemes introduced by the service provider. The customers recharge under the following schemes is as shown in the table 8.

TABLE 8: SCHEMES OF RECHARGE

Schemes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Life time validity	85	34.00
Add one card	41	16.40
Free talk time	49	19.60
Group simcard	50	20.00
Others	25	10.00
Total	250	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 250 respondents,85(34%) respondents prefer life time validity scheme, 50 (20%) respondents prefer group simcard, 49 (19.6%) respondents prefer free talk time scheme, 41(16.4%) respondents prefer add one card and 25 (10%) respondents prefer some other schemes.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE OF CELLULAR PHONE

There are various reasons for preferring cellular phones like features, pricing, brand image, advertisement, quality, dual sim facility, touch screen, etc. The factors ranked by cellular phone users are shown in the table 9.

TABLE 9: RANKS GIVEN BY THE RESPONDENTS

Factors	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
More features	34	41	89	39	23	14	3	7	250
Cheap pricing	27	74	34	21	28	17	24	25	250
Brand image	42	24	27	97	30	15	5	10	250
Advertisement	34	27	26	15	29	78	30	11	250
Quality	90	35	32	31	21	16	15	10	250
Dual sim facility	15	25	24	24	87	26	34	15	250
Touch screen	6	14	13	7	5	71	75	59	250
Others	2	10	5	16	27	13	64	113	250
Total	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	

Source: Primary data

Weighted ranking technique has been applied to analyse the factors influenced to buy a particular brand and the results are shown in the table 3.23.The ranks are scored and multiplied by the weight assumed as 8, 7,6,5,4,3,2,1.

TABLE 10: WEIGHTED RANKING TECHNIQUE

Factors	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total	Rank
More features	272	287	534	195	92	42	6	7	1435	II
Cheap pricing	216	518	204	105	112	51	48	25	1279	IV
Brand image	336	168	162	485	120	45	10	10	1336	III
Advertisement	272	189	159	75	116	234	60	11	1113	V
Quality	720	245	192	155	84	48	30	10	1484	I
Dual sim facility	120	175	144	120	348	78	68	15	1068	VI
Touch screen	48	98	78	35	20	213	150	59	701	VII
Others	16	70	30	80	108	39	128	113	584	VIII

Source: Primary data

Most of the respondents consider the quality of the cellular phone as their first preference with score 1484 followed by more features which gets II rank with a score of 1435. The factor, brand image gets III rank with score of 1336. The least score is 584 for other factors.

SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study the following suggestions are made to the dealers and customers.

- The dealers have to make arrangements for display of cellular phones in their shop.
- The dealers have to be updated of the technologies used in cellular phone services.
- The advertisement has to give correct information to the customers to entice the new customers and to retain existing customers.
- The dealers have to inform customers regularly regarding the schemes introduced by the service provider.
- The service provider has to improve their network coverage in rural areas.
- The customers are suggested that before buying cellular phone he/she should get a thorough knowledge about cellular phone through dealers, internet, catalogs, magazines, etc.
- Malpractices through cellular phones are to be strictly prohibited.
- It is suggested that customer care service centers have to function effectively in providing prompt response to the customers.
- The dealers have to be alert in framing innovative marketing strategies to compete with the increase in the competition in cellular phone industry.
- The dealers have to make the available services like Mobile banking, Mobile ticketing etc. possible for the customers' access.

Public have to aware of the misuse consequences in cellular phone

CONCLUSION

The cellular phone companies have to study the behaviour of the consumers while marketing their products and services. When they estimate the preferences of the customers in a right manner, they can stand in the market. Otherwise they are likely to be washed out from the market. At the same time, they have to concentrate on the activities of the competitors too. Effective strategies have to implement to face the competitions. Hence, if the cellular phone companies understand the behaviour pattern of the consumers and face the competition, they are sure to have a bright and prosperous future.

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