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- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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- Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–22 June.

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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Natural Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 <http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp>

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CUSTOMER PREFERENCE ON MOBILE COMMUNICATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY PRIVATE (AIRTEL) AND PUBLIC (BSNL) SECTOR IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The intention of the study is to compare the customer preference on mobile communication with reference to service provided by private and public sector at Coimbatore district. AIRTEL and BSNL are selected due to their high competitive nature in providing 3 generation technologies such as GPRS and MMS. Influence of demographic variables in the level of satisfaction yielded by the mobile users and to know their usage pattern, pre-purchase and post-purchase behavior and the media of influence behind the customer preference.

KEYWORDS

Post purchase behavior, Pre -purchase behavior, GPRS, MMS.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian cellular industry has been instrumental in bringing to the Indian consumer, a world-class telecom infrastructure. The Indian Cellular Industry is the flag-bearer of the Indian liberalization process. This industry is the largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment (around Rs. 2200 Crores)-A responsible performing sector that has met all its obligations to the GOI. The Industry would have invested over Rs. 25,000 crores. Coimbatore is a district where Industries of various categories function. Further several reputed Educational institutions belong to this district. This diversified mass attracts several marketers to root their foot in this area. It caters to the needs to world's renowned fashion labels. Nearly all service providers have their network in this area. BSNL is the public player operating and AIRTEL, AIRCEL, VODAFONE, TATA INDICOM, RELIANCE are the private mobile service providers. Among the private service providers BPL is relatively expensive when compared to the other players so in spite of their established network most of customers have not opted for VODAFONE, TATA INDICOM and RELIANCE are the mobile service providers functioning on the CDMA (Code Division Multiplexing Access) basis and the service of these mobile players are just budding in this region. "Early Bird Hatches Eggs", AIRCEL is the private service provider who addressed this market first so as a result they are enjoying a greater customer share. AIRTEL from Bharathi Teleservices is extending its customer base with new attractive schemes, value added services and enhanced coverage. They were able to retain the customer through their service. BSNL is the only public mobile service provider.

TELEMEDIA

AIRTEL

The Telemedia business provides services in 89 Indian cities and consists of two brands.

Airtel Broadband provides broadband and IPTV services. Airtel provides both capped as well as unlimited download plans (reduced speeds at unlimited data are implied). The maximum speed available for home users is 16Mbit/s.

Airtel has about 3.16 million wireline customers, of which 42.6% are broadband internet subscribers as of August 2010. Until 18 September 2004, Bharti provided Fixedline telephony and broadband services under the Touchtel brand. Bharti now provides all telecom services including fixedline services under a common brand "Airtel".

In 2000, Bharti acquired control of Skycell Communications, in Chennai. In 2001, the company acquired control of Spice Cell in Calcutta. Bharti Enterprises went public in 2002, and the company was listed on Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange of India. In 2003, the cellular phone operations were rebranded under the single Airtel brand. In 2004, Bharti acquired control of Hexacom and entered Rajasthan. In 2005, Bharti extended its network to Andaman and Nicobar. This expansion allowed it to offer voice services all across India. In 2009, Airtel launched its first international mobile network in Sri Lanka. In 2010, Airtel

Today, Airtel is the largest cellular service provider in India and the fourth largest in the world.

BSNL

At present BSNL enjoy's around 60% of market share of ISP services. 2007 was declared as "Year of Broadband" in India and BSNL announced plans for providing 5 million broadband connectivity by the end of 2007. BSNL upgraded Dataone connections for a speed of up to 2 Mbit/s without any extra cost. BSNL planned to increase its customer base to 108 million customers by 2010. With the frantic activity in the communication sector in India, the target appears achievable.

On 20 March 2009 BSNL advertised the launch of BlackBerry services across its Telecom circles in India. The corporation has also launched 3G services in select cities across the country. Presently, BSNL and MTNL are the only players to provide 3G services, as the Government of India has completed auction of 3G services for private players. BSNL shall get 3G bandwidth at lowest bidder prices of Rs 18,500 crore, which includes Rs 10,186 crore for 3G and Rs 8313 crore for BWA.

As of December 2011, many other private operators have started rolling out their 3rd Generation (aka 3G) services alongside and are enjoying some success in their campaigns to get market share. While BSNL still maintains its connectivity standard and expands to many more areas including rural areas with their 3G services. Also the network infrastructure has been upgraded from to provide 3.6 Mbit/s to 7.2 Mbits/sec. It is enjoying a slow but somewhat steady success in gaining market share in this regard.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the influence of Demographic variables in the Level of satisfaction yielded by the Mobile users.
- To know the Usage pattern of the Mobile users.
- To know the Media of Influence behind the customer preferences.
- To know about the Pre purchase and Post Purchase behavior of the Mobile users, this could provide a lead to the service providers about their area of enhancement.

METHODOLOGY

The Study is based on both the primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected through well structured Questionnaire and the secondary data have been collected from the books, journals, magazines and newspapers. The researcher has adopted Clusture sampling is employed in enrolling the AIRTEL and BSNL subscribers for survey. The tools used for this research are Percentage analysis, Chi-Square.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Percentage refers to a special kind of ratio in making comparison between two or more data and to describe relationships. Percentage can also be used to compare the relation terms the distribution of two or more sources of data.

$$\text{Percentage of Respondents} = \frac{\text{Number of Respondents}}{\text{Total Respondents}} \times 100$$

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

Chi-square is a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bi-variate tabular analysis. A non-parametric test, like chi square, is a rough estimate of confidence.

Chi-square is used most frequently to test the statistical significance of results reported in bivariate tables and interpreting bivariate tables is integral to interpreting the results of a chi-square test.

Chi – Square Test Method

The Chi – square method is the application of testing the significant difference between observed and expected values.

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

The hypothesis, or assumption, about a population parameter we wish to test, usually an assumption of the status quo.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁)

The conclusion we accept when the data fail to support the null hypothesis.

Statistical Test:

$$\text{Chi-square test } (\chi^2) = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Degrees of freedom = (R-1) (C-1)

- whereas, O = Observed frequency
- E = Expected frequency
- R = Number of rows
- C = Number of columns

To find E:

$$\text{Expected Frequency} = \frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Level of Significance (α):

A value indicating the percentage of sample values that is outside certain limits, assuming the null hypothesis is correct, that is, the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of pertinent literature is an important step in a research and it's meant to locate, elucidate and present the past as well as the current literature of research in a planned investigation. The review gives a clear perspective of the over all field of research and allows comparing the result of the studies in the particular field with the present research. It provides the researcher with an opportunity of gaining insight into the method and approaches employed by others and help to pursue the research.

The study entitled "Consumer attitude towards cell phone in Coimbatore",¹ an M.Phil. Dissertation submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University by Smt. Revathi Murali, focuses upon the market share of AIRTEL and AIRCEL. Further, the researcher measured the satisfaction levels of the customers. She had suggested many strategies for the Service Providers.

An article titled "Preference in cellular service providers in the post liberalization era"² by Miss. S. Revathi and Dr. S. Padmavathy concluded that the majority of the cellular service users are male and graduates. It suggests that the cellular service providers should reduce their charges to retain their market share and growth.

R. E. Butler,³ in his study has pointed out that all countries should undertake in depth review and analysis of their policies on communications development and stimulate accelerated development and communication infrastructure.

T. H. Chowdary,⁴ in his study points out that the skills and tasks of employees are crucial in case of external plant maintenance. Their moral and mobility, their ambassadorial role while interacting with customers must all be enhanced by proper management policies.

A. Narayanan,⁵ in his study has mentioned that inadequate and poor investments made by the developing countries in their telecommunication sectors have originate bottlenecks in many fields of development.

N. Manoharan,⁶ in his work, "Telecommunication – The case of Madurai" points out the introduction of modern technology in the external plant network which will result not only reliability but also reduction in the cost of maintenance.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BSNL AND AIRTEL ON THEIR SATISFACTION LEVEL

S.No.	Facilities	BSNL					AIRTEL				
		HS	S	N	DS	HDS	HS	S	N	DS	HDS
1	Network Coverage	63*	54	18*	0	0	50	67*	8	10*	0
2	Dealers Service	29*	78	26*	1	1*	24	87*	20	4*	0
3	Billing Practice	34*	64	31	5	1*	19	66*	39*	11*	0
4	Tariff Plan & Rate	54*	54*	24	3	0	46	47	37*	4*	1*
5	Response to query	33	62*	28*	8	4*	60*	46	20	9*	0
6	Advertisement	28	50	46*	10*	1	43*	64*	26	1	1*
7	Promotional Offers	22	47	57*	8	1	27*	54*	39	10*	5*
8	Access Mode	29	57	42*	7	0	36*	64*	18	12*	5*
9	Economical Viability	16	90*	19*	10*	0	24*	84	18	8	1*

* Indicates Maximum Number of Respondents compared with other.

The above table clearly portrays that, 87% are satisfied with the Dealers Service of AIRTEL. The BSNL subscribers are highly satisfied with Access mode, and the 90% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the economic viability,

FINDINGS

The level of satisfaction is high for respondents who use their mobile both for personal and official purpose in case of both BSNL and AIRTEL. 46% of AIRTEL respondents and 35% of BSNL subscribers know about their service providers through their friends, relatives, colleagues and so on. 5% of AIRTEL and 16% of BSNL subscribers know about their service provider through press media. 21% of the AIRTEL and 15% of BSNL respondents know about their service provider through Television advertisements. Through Dealers 18% of the AIRTEL and 15% of BSNL customers came to know about their service providers. 19% of BSNL and 10% of AIRTEL respondents know their service provider through outdoor advertisements. Only 9% of AIRTEL and 5% of BSNL subscribers have availed the service of more than a Mobile service provider. 11.4% of BSNL respondents' family members use AIRTEL. 68.6% use BSNL, 20.0% use Reliance and none of the family members of BSNL respondents use BPL or Aircel or Tata Indicom. There are more prepaid subscribers in AIRTEL and postpaid subscribers in BSNL. BSNL subscribers use the roaming facility more than that of the AIRTEL respondents. AIRTEL subscribers use the GPRS facility more than that of the BSNL respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

The mobile service providers could offer schemes based on the purpose of usage since this variable has a greater influence in the level of satisfaction yielded by the customers. Significant weightage should be given by the Mobile service providers in the promotional activities that could add a satisfied customer to its basket rather than other Advertisements since Word of Mouth communication is the best mean of reach. Since the percentage of switching from AIRTEL to BSNL is high, AIRTEL has to take some initiatives to retain its customers and to extend its market. AIRTEL has to enhance its network since the percentage of switching to AIRTEL is downsized due to low coverage. BSNL has to improve its service at customer desk since the percentage of switching to BSNL is low due to the lack of assistance at customer desk. The Mobile service providers could focus on the existing subscriber for adding new clients to their basket. AIRTEL could offer attractive postpaid schemes for enrolling their pre-paid subscribers into Post-paid plan.

CONCLUSION

The influence of Demographic variable in the level of satisfaction yielded by the mobile user as well as the Behavioral pattern of the mobile user is analyzed in this study. It is landed that Demographic variables do influence the level of satisfaction as well as the Variable in which the Public and Private Service provider should focus for their enhancement is suggested. Further, the customer expectations are comprehended from their usage pattern. On the basis of this comprehension it is suggested that AIRTEL should enhance its coverage. BSNL should focus on the service at customer desk and the promotional measures.

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