



CUSTOMERS PREFERENCE TO MULTI BRAND MOBILE PHONE SIM CARD RECHARGE COUPONS IN COIMBATORE

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Abstract

Communication has achieved tremendous development due to the advancement in Information technology. In India there number of branded service providers for mobile phones, SIM card and also for recharge coupon. They face toughest competition in communication technology and introducing their products in the market. In modern scenario all businesses are consumer oriented and every business man tries to satisfy the desires and needs of the end consumers. Even before designing the products they consider the attitudes and preferences of the consumers. They normally make a research and collect information about the consumer's attitudes and behavior towards their products with the help of R&D department of their concern. It is normally followed by well equipped companies. In telecom services also numbers of products are introduced in the markets like mobile phone, SIM cards, and also recharge coupon with varied features. If we consider the recharge coupon and its feature the service providers are very clever in making profits to the organization in all products. When the recharge coupon are bought, in some of the recharge coupon the balances are credited into special a/c of the consumers where most of the customers in the study area do not know, how to see the balances in the special a/c. It paves way to the services providers to reduce the balances in the special a/c stating different reasons i.e. in the use of recharge coupon and availing the internet facility. While using the internet facility by the consumers the balances are considerably reduced even though the consumers have not downloaded anything. This is the serious problems faced by even the educated consumers of recharge coupon. While approaching the customer care of all service providers, they some reason and inform that it will be rectified in a short time and also say that the amount will be credited in short span of time. However, normally it is not done properly. The position of illiterate consumers is pathetic. In many occasions, they could not contact anybody due to the balances reduced in their a/c without using the mobile phone. They simply recharge their SIM card with murmuring. This problem is occurring in all recharge coupons. Hence it is inevitable to create awareness to all consumers of SIM card recharge coupon in this regard. Further it is urgent and serious issue to be rectified immediately. By keeping the above in mind the researcher as a preliminary step tried to prepare an article titled "**CUSTOMERS PREFERENCE TO MULTI BRAND MOBILE PHONE SIM CARD RECHARGE COUPONS**" to create awareness to consumers of recharge coupons and find remedial measures to solve the problems faced by the consumers.

Introduction

Mobile Phones have proved themselves to be one of the greatest gifts to the mankind. They have become an indispensable part of our lives. But going back in time, owning a mobile phone was confined to members of affluent class. All thanks to cost cutting techniques and innovations over a period of time; mobile phones are now affordable for everyone. With a plethora of mobile phones sets flooding the market, they are not just catering to the needs but are acting as status symbols for many.

Origin of this gadget is quite interesting. Starting from bulky mobiles phones which were as long and heavy as one's forearms, to ultra thin and techno savvy handsets, mobiles phones have covered a long way so far. It all started with the basic telephony. Alexander Graham Bell was the first one to patent telephone in the year 1876. This technology was developed using the equipment designed for telegraph. Calls were connected with the help of operators. And a pillar of the mobile telephony came into existence when Charles Stevenson invented radio communication in early 1890s for keeping contacts with the offshore lighthouses. Marconi transmitted signals over the distance of 2 kilometers in year 1894. And Fessenden capably broadcasted music through radio by 1906.

And the following development was merger of radio telephone technology. In 1926, first class passenger trains, running from Berlin to Hamburg used the technology. These radio telephones were also used for air traffic safety as well as in the passenger airplanes. At the time of Second World War, German tanks made great use of these radio telephones too.

Two way radios was an ancestor of the mobiles phones. These radios also known as the mobile rigs, were fixed police cruisers, ambulances, taxicabs before advent of handheld mobile phones. Since the mobile radios were given connection to telephone network, one could not dial these from the home phones. And slowly this technology gained popularity among the mobile radio users.

Later versions of these radio phones incorporated cigarette lighter plugs and were called bag phones. Fixed in the vehicles, these gadgets were either used as portable two way radios or mobile phones. And then in 1940s, Motorola came with new



developments in mobile phones. And this is how Walkie Talkie was born. Large, bulky and battery operated, this Handie Talkie soon found a way to US military.

Another turning point came in the history of mobile phones when the base station for mobile phones came into being. Engineers from Bell Labs developed the base stations in 1947. The same year, W. Rae Philip and Douglas H. Ring developed hexagonal cells for these mobile phones. But an engineer, Porter from Bell Labs, suggested positioning of the cell towers at corners of hexagons instead of center. He also argued for the directional antennas, for transmitting or receiving the signals in the three directions, into adjacent hexagon cells.

In 1956, Ericsson Company released the earliest full automatic cellular phone system called MTA in Sweden. Though this gadget was operated automatically but due to its bulkiness, could not really hold the users interest for long. It is surprising to hear that this mobile phone weighed around 40 kilograms back then. And then improved and lighter version of the same phone was introduced in 1965. This was known as MTB and used the DTMF signaling.

Soon in 1957, Leonid Kupriyanovich developed experimental model of wearable mobile phones in Moscow, operating with the help of base station. This young engineer had earlier developed the radio phone known as LK-1. The battery life of the wearable mobile phone by the young inventor lasted for around 20-30 hours. Weighing 3 kilograms, it worked within the distance of 20 to 30 km from the station. Later he patented the mobile phones and also came up with a version of pocket mobile phone that was just of 0.5 kilograms in the same year.

Then again automatic pocket mobile phone was developed in 1966 at Bulgaria. Called RAT-0.5, phone coordinated with the base station known as RATZ-10. And further developments in the field of the cellular phones were witnessed in 1967. It was decided that every mobile phone would be catered to a base station throughout its life. Though this was not that novel concept, need of one base station at least broke continuity of the automatic services to the mobile phones. After three years, in 1970, another engineer Ames E. Joel invented automatically operated call handoff technology. This system allowed the mobile phones to pass through cell areas while making a phone call without any loss of conversation. This was the time when the mobile user could use the gadget without any disturbance.

Further in year 1971, AT&T Incorporation projected mobile phone service that was approved by FCC later. Another development in the history of mobile phones was registered with ARP network's success launched in Finland. It was the earliest commercial cellular phones and was known as Zero Generation mobile network.

Invention of mobile phones that closely resembles today's mobile phones is credited to Martin Cooper, employer and researcher of Motorola. He initially developed cellular phone named Motorola Dynatac in 1973. With 5 inches width and 9 inches length, this 2.5 pounds weighing phone carried around 30 circuit boards in it. With recharge time of around 10 hours, talk time of 35 minutes, this phone gave comfortable talking experience to the users. One could listen, dial and talk on this mobile phone but what was missing was display screen. With passing time, refinements were made and these mobile phones improved by leaps and bounds.

With introduction of Global System for the mobile communications, radio spectrum could be used effectively. The technology gave great voice quality, international roaming facilities along with compatibility with ISDN systems. And further for providing coverage to the remote areas that ISDN, GSM and cellular phones could not offer, satellite phones came into being. Base station for the satellite phones were built in the geostationary satellites. And now there is no place on the planet that is untouched by the mobile phones.

The need for research in advertising is vital. Research can be done in various stages from advertising planning to post advertising effectiveness tests. The research can be used for developing advertising strategies and to know the impact of the developed strategies. Audience attention plays an immense role in the effectiveness of advertisements. Advertising research is a part of marketing research to understand the behavior of customers in order to sent the marketing messages effectively to them. "Advertising Research may focus on a specific ad or campaign, or may be directed at a more general understanding of how advertising works or how consumers use the information in advertising. It can entail a variety of research approaches, including psychological, sociological, economic, and other perspectives. Although the impact of advertising has been studied for many decades, behavior of audience and likeability factors in advertising have become subjects of increasing importance, one of the major reasons of ineffectiveness results from avoidance of ads. To draw their attention and interest to watch the ads various efforts have been taken by Advertiser and Ad makers.

Consumers get confused regarding purchase decision-making due to over and forced exposure of ads. Sometimes they felt exploited by the advertisers. The goal of advertising is to present products or services in an effective way so that individuals



will purchase them. To make the process successful, advertisers continuously take additional efforts in creating the ads and they constantly conduct research to know the impact of their effects.

Advertising has long been a subject of research in various disciplines such as mass communication, marketing, sociology, social psychology and various cultural anthropology and cultural studies. Many audiences make conscious efforts in avoiding the advertisements and they do not make extra efforts in understanding the complex messages conveyed in the advertisements, they simply switch over or switch off the television. It has been a great challenge for the ad men to make the audience to watch advertisements which is the first step in increasing the effectiveness. They strive to grab the attention by making the ad watchable by using likeable items.

Advertising is a tool to communicate with customers and prospective customers to persuade them in order to buy the product. Effectiveness of ads depends upon the effectiveness of the communication strategies and the message content shown. Advertisements are liked by consumers when they possess quality to stimulate the mental process of the audience and the desired outcome is also achieved through the same. Collect (1994) in his study revealed that likeability has an important role in enabling the responsiveness of the consumers towards advertising, thereby creating the opportunity to develop effectiveness in communication. Likeability is not the only factor judging the effectiveness of the advertisements, but likeable attributes in ads engenders trust through the implementation of source credibility.

Likeability attributes was found to be a better predictor of sales than other copy test measures in the ARF copy research validity study (Haley 1991, and Bal Dinger 1991). Likeable advertising has an impact on persuasion and it affects the emotional component of audience's attitude towards the brand. Extensive research has accumulated over three decades that indicates both disliked and liked advertisements are memorable and result in recall. Liking is only one of many elements of advertising effectiveness (Hollis, 1994) but a potentially important one in building brand loyalty (Margaret and Barbara 1996).

In understanding the impact of television ads, understanding the viewer and their behavioral response to television advertisement is vital. Audience viewing behaviour specifies the relationship between audience response and their level of attention to advertisements. Advertisers not only intent to know the information on the size of their audience but also on the reaction of their audiences to their ads the extent to which viewers are involved with (audience profile) and attentive to, what they are watching.

The present study is of great significance as it directly relates to the most dynamic channel of promotion on which the modern market and even the economy depends. The broad concern of this study directly relates to the behavior of audience in relation to the TV commercials. The interest of the researcher is focused on understanding audience perception towards advertisements and the study covers various facets of advertising, behavioral responses to TV Ads, attributes of likeable commercials, general attributes and various other facts like diverse perception of ads in relation to viewer's attitudes, sex, likes, dislikes, habits, fears, and desires.

The field of advertising is very abstract and measuring the range of the influence of TV commercials is quite a complex task and was very challenging for the researcher. The existence of diametrically opposing views and doubtful inferences regarding the field of television advertisements add to the significance of the present study.

Objectives of The Study

The study is undertaken with the following objectives

1. To analyze the profile of the consumers.
2. To analyze the reasons for brand preference of the consumers
3. To study the customer preference towards selected mobile phone recharging companies.
4. To examine various features of mobile phone recharge that influencing the customers.

Scope of Study

The world advertising is derived from the Latin word, "adverto", "Ad" meaning towards and "verto" meaning "to turn". Literally, it means "totally turn people's attention to a specific thing". The term 'Advertising' is derived from the French word 'Advertisir' which means to notify, to inform, to give notice of or 'to give public information or announcement of'. The dictionary meaning of word advertising is "to give public notice or to announce publicly". Whatever be the origin of the word, advertising means informing the public about the availability of a particular product or services, stimulating their desire for the advertised product or service and including them to by the same. Leading mobile phone recharge companies in

Coimbatore are Airtel, Aircel, BSNL, Docomo CDMA, Docomo GSM, Idea, Reliance-GSM, CDMA, MTS, Vodafone, Tata Indicom, Uninor, and Videocon.

Methodology

Research Methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science studying how research is done scientifically. In research it is the responsibility of the research to expose the research decisions to evaluate before they are implemented. The researcher has to specify very clearly and precisely what decisions he select and why he select them, so that others can evaluate on it. So the adoption of proper methodology is an essential step-in conducting a researcher study. "A research design is the arrangement of condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure". Through my researcher has undertaken a descriptive type of research. It describes the characteristics of individual or presentation of answer for question like whom what, when and how relating to a field or matter. This study will present the state of affairs as if exists. This type of study helps to know the past and to predict the future. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. The sample design should be reliable and appropriate for the study, which is to be conducted.

The researcher has taken into consideration the teachers working in the Professionals, Business Peoples, Farmers, and the like are residing in Coimbatore district. The researcher conducted their study in Coimbatore district in and around rural and urban. The sample size should not be too small or too large. If so more error will occurrence or more time will be consumed. Hence an optimum size of 400 was taken. Quota sampling technique is used. Since a specific number of population elements were selected for inclusion in the sample based on their department, it can be called as quota sampling. Primary data are those, which are collected a fresh and for the time and thus happen to be original in character with the help of questionnaire, the researcher collected the primary data. In this study a structured questionnaire containing both closed and opened question was administrated. It is difficult to plan a major study or project without adequate knowledge of subject matter, the population to cover and soon pilot study is the replica and rehearsal of main survey. A pilot study was undertaken among 400 respondents prior to the main study in order to find out the difficulties and to over come he bias in the questionnaire. The study is confirmed to a period of February 2017 to July 2017.

With the help of filled questionnaire a master table was prepared. Then it is converted into necessary tables based on the dimensions of marketing survey. Simple percentage analysis and Chi-square test.

Table 1: Levels Of Brand Preference Of Consumers

Sl. No.	Level of Brand Preference	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Low level (1 - 3)	70	17.5%
2.	Medium Level (4 - 6)	256	64%
3.	High Level (7 and Above)	74	18.5%
	Total	400	100

From the above table it is ascertained that 64 percentage of consumers had medium level brand preference, 17.5 percentage of consumers had low level preference and 18.5 percentage had high level category.

Table 2: Gender And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Gender	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Male	34	40	60	134 (33.5%)
2.	Female	62	41	163	266 (66.5%)
	Total	96	81	223	400

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 33.5 percentage of consumers are male and the rest 66.5 percentage of consumers are female and among male members 29.85% comes under the Medium level, 25.37% belong to low level, 44.77% are in high level for the reason for brand preference, Among female category 15.41% comes under the Medium level, 62.40% in high level, 23.30% in low level category for their reason for brand preference.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between male and female sample consumers in the reason for brand preference.

Chi-square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between male and female sample consumers. The calculated value of chi-square is 9.501 at 5% level of significance, since calculated value is more than table value 5.99, it is inferred that there is significant relationship between male and female sample consumers in the reason for brand preference. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Age Group And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Age Group	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Upto 20 years	68	93	45	206 (51.5%)
2.	21 – 30 years	10	34	14	58 (14.5%)
3.	31 – 40 years	26	28	14	68 (17%)
4.	41 – 50 years	8	36	6	50 (12.5%)
5.	Above 51 years	8	8	8	18 (4.5%)
	Total	120	199	81	400

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is ascertained that 51.5 percentage of consumers are in the age group of upto 20 years, 14.5 percentage of consumers are in the age group of 21-30 years, 17 percentage of consumers are in the age group of 41-50 years and 4.5 percentage of consumers are in the age group of above 51 years.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between age group of sample consumers in the for brand preference.

Chi-square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between age group of sample consumers. The calculated value of chi-square is 15.39 at 5% level of significant, since calculated value is less than table value of 15.5, it is inferred that there is no significant relationship between age group of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: Marital Status And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Married	34	76	26	136 (34%)
2.	Unmarried	28	186	50	264 (66%)
	Total	62	262	76	400

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is clear that 34 percentage of consumers are married and the rest 66 percentage are unmarried.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between marital status of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference.

Chi-square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between marital status of sample consumers. The calculated value of chi-square is 8.39 at 5% level of significance, since calculated value is more than table value of 5.99, it is inferred that there is significant relationship between marital status of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5: Monthly Income And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Monthly Income	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Upto Rs.5,000	82	84	90	256 (64%)
2.	Rs.5,001 to Rs.10,000	14	26	16	56 (14%)
3.	Rs.10,001 to Rs.15,000	12	20	14	46 (11.5%)
4.	Rs.15,001 to Rs.20,000	2	10	0	12 (3%)
5.	Above Rs.20,001	12	16	2	30 (7.5%)
	Total	122	156	122	400

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, 64 percentage of consumers have an income ranging from upto Rs.5,000 per month, 14 percentage of consumers have an income ranging from Rs.5,001 – Rs.10,000, 11.5 percentage of consumers have an income ranging from

Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000, 3 percentage of consumers have an income ranging from Rs.15,001 – Rs.20,000 and 7.5 percentage of consumers have an income ranging Rs.20,001 and above.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between monthly incomes of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference.

Chi-square test was applied to find whether is any significant relationship between monthly incomes of sample consumers and reasons for brand preference. The calculated value of chi-square is 8.342 at 5% level of significance, since calculated value is no significant relationship between monthly incomes of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6:Motivation To Purchase And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Factors of Motivation	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Self	40	100	32	172 (43%)
2.	Relatives	6	12	2	20 (5%)
3.	Friends	12	8	10	30 (7.5%)
4.	Colleagues	0	1	1	2 (0.5%)
5.	Family member	10	132	28	170 (42.5%)
6.	Others	2	2	2	6 (1.5%)
	Total	70	255	75	400

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is ascertained that 43 percentage of consumers are purchased the brand on their own decision, 5 percentage of consumers are motivated by relatives, 7.5 percentage of consumers are motivated by friends, 0.5 percentage of consumers are motivated by colleagues, 42.5 percentage of consumers are motivated by family members, 1.5 percentage of consumers are motivated by colleagues.

Null Hypothesis: Basis of motivation of sample consumers in the reason for brand preference.

Chi-square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between marital status of sample consumers. The calculated value of chi-square is 8.39 at 5% level of significance, since calculated value is more than table value of 5.99, it is inferred that there is significant relationship between marital statuses of the sample consumers in the reason for brand preference. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7:Place Of Purchase And Reasons For Brand Preference

Sl. No.	Place of Purchase	Level of Brand Preference			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1.	Company showroom	127	140	65	332 (43%)
2.	Retail outlets	3	17	11	31 (5%)
3.	Bazaar	3	12	3	18 (7.5%)
4.	Wholesaler	0	5	5	10 (0.5%)
5.	Others	2	4	3	9 (42.5%)
	Total	135	178	87	400

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is identified that 83 percentage of consumers are purchased their television from company showroom, 21 percentage of consumers are purchased their television Retail outlets, 11 percentage of consumers are purchased their television from Bazaar, 7 percentage of consumers are purchased their television from wholesaler and 6 percentage of consumers are purchased their television from others.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant between advertisement media and reason for brand preference

Chi-square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between places of purchase of sample consumers. The calculated value of chi-square is 6.01 at % level of significance, since calculated value is less than table value of 12.6, it is inferred that there is no significant relationship between advertisement media and reason for preference. Hence the hypotheses are accepted.



Suggestions

Mobile recharge coupons are advertised to increase the sale of the recharge coupon by the different Telecom companies like AIRCELL, AIRTEL, TATA, RELIANCE and IDEA etc. All the companies try to give the features of their recharge coupon and also the SIM cards which are provided by them with some special offer actually the consumers in this regard are confused with the schemes and features of the recharge card and also with features of new SIM cards. Due to the heavy competition in the telecom, services all the companies are trying to provide more information about their products which further makes the consumer confused with the information. In rural area most of the consumers have limited literacy rate. Hence the telecom service provider should consider the understanding level of the consumers and if possible they should try to change the contents of the advertisement copy as a whole and should give simple and precise information about their products which will help the rural consumers to understand the concepts of the advertisement and the features of the recharge coupons.

It is reported that the retailers and the agent for selling the SIM cards and re-charge coupon give wrong information about the features and SIM cards when the customers approach them for getting information about the recharge coupon and SIM card, hence the telecom companies and the Government should monitor this issue seriously and give strict warning to the retail sellers of SIM cards and recharge coupon.

Further most of the consumers informed that the telecom companies collect some unknown charges from the consumers when they use mobile internet cards, when they use mobile internet package and cards. This mainly occurs due to lack of adequate knowledge of the consumers in using the mobile internet recharge coupon. The government should take initiatives to control these types of practices of the telecom service providers.

Some of the consumers informed that almost all telecom service providers deduct the amount from the balance of the recharge coupon for the facilities which are not used by the consumers like caller tones, music and SMS. Normally these deductions are made during night hours. Most of the rural consumers could not be able to identify the reason for this. These practices are to be immediately controlled and the employees in the customers care services of the telecom company should rectify the problems if any complaint received from the consumers.

Conclusion

The demand for mobile recharge application is growing rapidly in all age group. Most of the respondents are found to be loyal to their brands. The ultimate aim of all business men is to increase the profit of the business gradually. But all the businessmen must have some sort of social responsibility. In modern scenario all the businesses are consumer oriented. Hence nowadays the business people give due importance to consumer satisfaction. Even before the designing of the products the consumers taste and preferences are considered by all the business men. The business men must try to satisfy the consumers in possible ways. Then only they can survive in the market for long time. Hence the service providers in the telecom industry should be very careful in giving information in their advertisement copy regarding the features of the recharge coupon and the New SIM cards introduced in the market. Further they must give clear cut and proper information to the sellers of recharge coupon and SIM cards with the help of the marketing divisions and marketing executives of the company which will help the retail sellers of SIM cards and recharge coupon to explain the features to all the consumers in a proper way where the consumers and customers of mobile recharge coupon can understand the features rightly and make buying decision with regard to recharge coupon and New SIM cards.

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