

EVALUATE THE FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS MOBILE NETWORK SERVICE PROVIDER IN LIONTOWN AREA OF THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

A research study was conducted with an objective to understand the Indian consumers' perception choice in selecting cellular mobile telecommunication service providers. Consumers' perception is widely varied in accordance with the Communication quality, call service, facilities, price, customer care and service provider's attributes. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect the required primary data from the consumers. The outcome of this research shows a comprehensively integrated framework to understand the relationships among several dimensions. The study shows communication and price were most influential and most preferential factors in selecting telecommunication service provider. However, product quality and availability has a significant impact on consumer perception choice in selecting cellular mobile service provider.

Key Words: Mobile services, customer preferences, customer satisfaction, Mobile Network, Telecommunication, data

INTRODUCTION

Mobile services were introduced in India in the late 1990s and the population is the main advantage for any market player operating in India. The mobile network service providers are ready to serve their subscribers anywhere at any time to retain the existing subscribers to earn a new subscribers. By knowing the preference and buying behaviour of the consumers the mobile network service providers can develop the promotional method to survive in the competitive market. The healthy competition between the different mobile network service providers create the mobile number portability, value added service, voice message, MMS, SMS, unbreakable signals, scheme changes, easy to recharge, other comfortable and satisfactory service to the mobile network subscribers. Usage of the mobile network by the lower and middle class people increased by reducing the mobile network subscribing tariff from Rs 14 to Rs. 1.

The mobile service first operator in India is the state-owned incumbent BSNL. Subsequently, after the telecommunication policies were revised to allow private operators, companies such as **VODAFONE ,IDEA, AIRTEL, AIRCEL, JIO, RELIANCE, TATA DOCOMO** have entered the space in India. Mobile service providers have their own plans, policies, packages and corresponding rates. Although they are offered by various companies, they have only one common purpose of telecommunication services to the world. And that is to provide people with telecommunication services so that they could maintain good conversations either for personal purposes or for business reasons.

Consumers' Task

Choosing network is the main task of costumer. Which one is the best network among the various network? It is consumers' task to think about as to which company can provide him the Coverage & Network speed and quality, Price and plans, Customer Service & Reliability, Additional features & Benefits best service. Who offers the widest selection of features and excellent customer service and avoids hidden charges.

Factors that affect consumer preferences about network

- Network quality: Consumers prefer networks with stable coverage and high speeds
- Price: Consumers consider the cost of the service
- Brand image: Consumers may prefer brands they are familiar with or that have a good reputation
- Convenience: Consumers may prefer services that are easy to use
- Personal tastes: Consumers may have their own preferences based on their personal tastes

How to understand consumer preferences

Surveys and forms: Online surveys and forms can be used to collect feedback directly

Consumer

Studies: Studies can be conducted to explore and analyze consumer preferences

Customer choose a mobile network, here are some the factors to consider:

Coverage & Network Quality

- Check which network has the best signal strength in their area.
- Ask if they travel frequently (nationally or internationally).
- Look for 4G/5G availability if they need high-speed data.

Pricing & Plans

- Prepaid vs. Postpaid: Do they prefer paying in advance or a monthly bill?
- Data Needs: Heavy data users need unlimited or high-data plans.
- Call & SMS: Are they making many calls or using mostly data-based apps?
- International Roaming: Do they call or travel abroad often?

Customer Service & Reliability

- Some networks offer better customer support than others.
- Check reviews for billing issues, complaint handling, and service quality.

Features & Benefits

- Bundled services like free streaming subscriptions or cloud storage.

Additional Family or group plans for cost savings

- Loyalty rewards or cashback offers
- Would you like help comparing specific networks or plan?

Consumer feedback

While browsing and gaming follow behind this indicated a trend towards social media engagement and entertainment consumer as majority drivers of mobile data demands. While mobile network coverage always not notable role and customer service although important is not majority deciding factor for most user.

Statement of the problem

At present, the demand for mobile phone is increasing. There are many players in the rolling in the modern industry. To market their services, every company is adding many new features. The subscribers are provided with various schemes of mobile phone services. And the market for mobile phone has become very competitive. There is cut throat competition between private sector and public sector undertakings such as Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.

(BSNL). Due to poor area coverage, many mobile phone industries lost their market. Non-existence of towers in rural areas resulted in a great loss for many mobile phone industries.

Scope of the study

The main aim of the study is to establish a platform to examine the customer preferences for the selected mobile networks. The study also extends to understand the factors influencing to use the particular mobile network service.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the prominent factors which influence the choice of mobile service provider.
2. To find out the customer satisfaction towards various mobile network service providers.
3. To find out which service provider influences more customers.
4. To identify the various networks used by the respondents

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mack and Sharpies (2009) showed that availability is the most crucial determinant of mobile choice. Other attributes, particularly features, aesthetics, and cost, have implications for mobile brand choice.

Myilswamy, Ratheesh Kumar(2013) find that the postpaid and prepaid customer prefer to use Airtel mobile service because of the features, Rent, Tower coverage, Talk time, Advertisement and Corporate schemes.

Zafar (2013) examines the impact of the mobile service attributes like call rates, service quality, service availability; promotion and brand image of both the gender's purchasing decision.

METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted among respondents of different age groups to examine their consumer preferences for various mobile network service providers. The research was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to a sample of 110 respondents, from whom responses were collected.

Primary data

The primary data was collected using the simple random sampling method from the selected respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to gather information such as consumer preference, opinions and factors influencing their choice of mobile network providers.

Secondary data

Secondary data was collected from standard reference books, journals, articles and websites.

Tools used analysis

The tools used for data analysis include tables, pie charts, and bar diagram.

Limitations of the study

- This study is limited to 110 respondents. Therefore, the findings and suggestions based on this study cannot be generalized to the entire population.
- The study was conducted within a specific period, and consumer preference may change over time due to evolving market trends and technological advancements.

Table 1.1

Type of network speed

S.NO	Types of mobile network Speed	No. of the respondents	Percentage
1	2G	18	16%
2	3G	18	16%
3	4G	54	49%
4	5G	20	20%
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

This table clearly shows that mobile network speed used by 110 respondents. The majority 55% of the respondents used 4G, indicating that is the most preferred network speed, a significant portion 20% of the respondents use 5G, showing some adoption of newer technology, 2G & 3G each account for 16% suggesting that a minority still rely on older network respectively.

Figure: 1.1.1

Types of mobile network speed

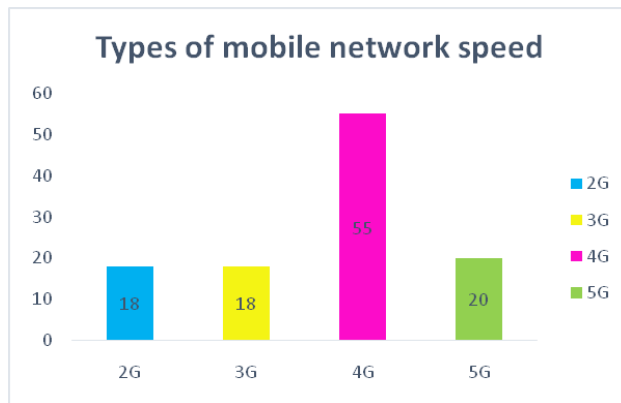


Table:1.2

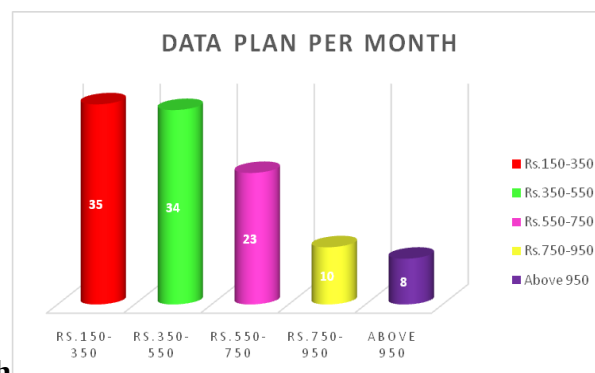
Data plan per month

S. No	Data Plan	No. of the respondents	Percentage
1	Rs.150-350	35	32%
2	Rs.350-550	34	31%
3	Rs.550-750	23	20%
4	Rs.750-950	10	9%
5	Above 950	8	7%
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

This table presents data on the spending habits of the respondents on mobile data plans. 32% of the respondents spending Category Rs. 150 – 350, 31% of the respondents spending category is Rs. 350-550, 20% of the respondents range has Rs.550-750, 9% of the respondents range has Rs.750-950 and finally the lowest 7% of the respondents Rs. 950 above respectively.

Figure 1.2.2



Data plan per month

CORRELATION

The relationship between two variables like data plan spending and network speed. There is a positive correlation between data spending and network speed.

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) = -0.31

P-value= 0.69

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient of -0.31 suggests a weak negative correlation between data plan spending and network speed usage. This means that higher spending on data plans does not strongly correlate with the use of higher network speeds (4G/5G). The p-value (0.69) is high, indicating that the correlation is not statistically significant.

Conclusion:

The study on factors influencing consumer preference towards mobile service providers highlights several key determinants that shape consumer choice. Network coverage, service quality, pricing, data speed, and customer support emerge as the most critical factors affecting consumer decisions. Additionally promotional offers, brand reputation, and value added services also play a significant role in shaping preferences. Findings suggest that consumers prioritize to data plan and high speed internet connectivity over other factors. However, affordability remains a crucial consideration, especially among price sensitive users. Customer service experiences also impact brand loyalty as consumer tend to switch providers when faced with unresolved issues or poor service support.

Furthermore, external factors such as technological advancements, market competition, and regulatory policies continue to influence consumer behaviour and network provider choices. As mobile networks evolve with emerging technologies like 5G, consumer expectations will likely shift towards faster and more efficient services. To remain competitive, mobile network providers must focus on enhancing service quality, offering competitive pricing, and improving customer engagement. Understanding consumer preference through regular

surveys and feedback mechanisms will be essential for providers to adapt and innovate in an evolving telecom landscape.

FINDINGS

- Mostly 32% of the respondents spending mobile data Rs. 150 – 350.
- The majority of respondents 55% prefer 4G network marking in the most widely used network speed this indicates that 4G remains the dominated mobile network technology among the respondents.

SUGGESTION:

- 4G is the dominated network type among respondents while id growing 5G adoption relatively.
- The majority of respondents 54% use 1-5GB of mobile data per month. This indicates that most respondents have moderate mobile data used habit.

CONCLUSION

The Indian mobile telephony market has grown at a rapid speed in the last decade. Declining the call tariffs and favourable regulatory policies have led to a tremendous increase in the subscribers' base. Proper identification of the Customer preferences will facilitate the favourableness towards the various mobile service providers. Continuous research on consumers will enhance the customer satisfaction.

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