



CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS BRANDED MOBILE ON RURAL AND URBAN AREA - A STUDY ON MOBILE PHONE BUYERS

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Abstract

The technology that gives a person the power to communicate anytime, anywhere – has spawned an entire industry in mobile telecommunications. Mobile telephones have become an integral part of the growth, success and efficiency of any business/economy. Consumers are the backbone of all business organizations & coherently all business activities concern with consumer and consumer satisfaction. Brand acts as a signal allowing customer to quickly recognize a product as they are familiar with or one they like. The powerful brand is which resides in the mind of the consumer. This paper examines how the rural and urban populations conceive the notion of "BRAND". The research aims at comparing the buying behavior of rural & urban consumer & find out their priorities while making a purchase decision regarding mobile phones.

This study has been conducted through literature study as well as a questionnaire administered survey of 120 respondents of different age groups, income & occupation and has been analyzed through various analytical tool to comply with the objectives & also to draw conclusions. The study reveals that the urban consumer is more brand and style 'conscious' compared to its rural counterpart which prioritizes functionality and price more. It also shows that urban population relies majorly on internet as source of information whereas rural population relies on T.V. ads & Mobile phone retailers. This paper may suggest as a valuable guideline for management to review their advertising campaigns & modify their mobiles according to the need of the customer.

Introduction

The government of India recognizes that the provision of a world-class telecommunications infrastructure and information is the key to rapid economic and social development of the country. It is critical not only for the development of the information technology industry, but also has widespread ramifications on the entire economy of the country.

Although mobile phones have become a fundamental part of personal communication across the globe during the past ten years, consumer research has devoted little specific attention to motives and choice underlying the mobile phone buying decision process.

The individual and environmental factor influences the consumer behavior. Often, consumer in India purchases the goods and services, which they want, others to accept. Behavior is therefore determined by the individual's psychological makeup and the influence of other. Thus behavior is the result of interaction of the consumer & personal influence and pressure exerted upon them by outside forces in the environment. An understanding of buying behavior is essential in marketing and planning programs. Comprehensive research of consumer behavior gives the advertiser a deeper insight of his target section of market, which in turn proves to be very significant in strategic advertising decisions, especially in defining the target markets and creating the advertising appeal and message. Modern Urban buyers along with the product features also want to know how and why the product will benefit them. They look not only for what a product can do but also what it means to them. Thus, buying behavior involves a complicated series of stimulus and response. The mobile phone itself has also become a totemic and fashion object, with users decorating, customizing, and accessorizing their mobile phones to reflect their personality. In the rationale of modern marketing, the firm existence is dependent on customer's satisfaction. Therefore, the knowledge of "what the customer thinks" and "what consequently would contribute to his satisfaction" is at the requirement of the marketer.

Usage of cell phones is not restricted to urban talk and educated youth. Brands evolve to keep up with changing demographics, changing spending habits, consumer lifestyles, and various ethnicities becoming more prevalent. Indian Marketers on rural marketing have two understandings- (i) The urban metro products and marketing products can be implemented in rural markets with some or no change. (ii) The rural marketing required the separate skills and techniques from its urban counterpart.

Purpose of the Research

This research is designed to investigate the influence of Brand name & Advertisements on two different sections of society- the urban & the rural consumer base respectively. Essentially the research aspires to study the topic through reviewing related articles & also by getting the perceptions of knowledgeable individuals regarding the topic through surveys. Moreover, this study will focus on the following goals:

- To study the significant difference, if any, in the purchasing motive, preferences, taste of the urban & rural consumer.
- To know about the awareness level of consumer regarding 'Brands'.
- To identify and analyze the difference in the factors which impinge on to the satisfaction level of both types of consumers.
- To make suggestions on the basis of findings.

Hypotheses

- The level of awareness of 'Branded 'a product among the customers is average.
- Brand image & Advertisement has significant relationship with consumer buying behavior.

Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out with the following objectives:

- The study aims at comparing the preference for brand recognition among urban and rural mobile users.
- The study aims to compare different age group people in the purchase of mobile phone among rural and urban mobile users.
- The study aims to compare the preference of brand recognition among different income groups among the respondents.
- The study aims to compare preference of functionality, quality and price over brand recognition among rural and urban mobile users.
- The study aims at finding the most preferable mobile brands among rural and urban mobile users.

Statement of the Problem

In present times, "Brand name" is emerging out to be one of the strongest marketing tools in all fields. Narrowing down our view to mobile phones, we can see that Brand Image plays a significant role in customer decision making process. But due to lack of technological advancements, 60% of total population residing in rural areas is still deprived of this "Notion" as compared to their urban counterparts. The present study made an attempt to investigate the influence of Brand image and advertisement on both urban and rural sections of the Indian society.

Significance of the Study

This study helps firms and organizations to improve their market strategies by understanding issues like:

- How the psychology of an urban differs from rural consumers i.e. how they think, feel, reason & select among different alternatives (e.g. brand, product etc.)
- How both consumers are influenced by his/her environment (e.g. culture, family, signs, media etc.)
- How limitation in consumer knowledge & information processing abilities influence decision making & marketing.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table – 1: Classification of Respondents - Durability

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	452	3.77	49	174	3.55	71	278	3.92
Samsung	120	481	4.01	49	201	4.10	71	280	3.94
Lg	120	500	4.17	49	207	4.22	71	293	4.13
Lenovo	120	504	4.20	49	203	4.14	71	301	4.24
Motorola	120	499	4.16	49	195	3.98	71	304	4.28
Micromax	120	357	2.98	49	153	3.12	71	204	2.87
Others	120	296	2.47	49	132	2.69	71	164	2.31

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation: From the above table it is clearly understood that, Lenovo scored 4.20, even though Lenovo scored highest score, there is not much deviation among top four in this category (Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola) in terms of Durability. Non Branded scored the lowest.

Urban customers have given highest rank to LG, but not much deviation among Samsung, LG and Lenovo whereas rural customer unable to distinguish the between LG, Lenovo, Motorola.

Table – 2: Classification of Respondents – Picture

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	468	3.90	49	178	3.63	71	290	4.08
Samsung	120	459	3.82	49	181	3.69	71	278	3.92
LG	120	513	4.27	49	212	4.33	71	301	4.24
Lenovo	120	517	4.31	49	212	4.33	71	305	4.30
Motorola	120	500	4.17	49	210	4.29	71	290	4.08
Micromax	120	355	2.96	49	132	2.69	71	223	3.14
Others	120	362	3.02	49	156	3.18	71	206	2.90

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

Lenovo and LG scored highest scored on Picture clarity. Others fall short on picture clarity. Micromax and Non-branded Scored the lowest scored on picture clarity.

It clearly shows there's not much difference in perception among rural and urban customers on picture clarity.

Table –3: Classification of Respondents - Design

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	441	3.67	49	174	3.55	71	267	3.76
Samsung	120	493	4.11	49	203	4.14	71	290	4.08
Lg	120	496	4.13	49	200	4.08	71	296	4.17
Lenovo	120	481	4.01	49	199	4.06	71	282	3.97
Motorola	120	498	4.15	49	203	4.14	71	295	4.15
Micromax	120	376	3.13	49	160	3.27	71	216	3.04
Others	120	426	3.55	49	174	3.55	71	252	3.55

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

From the above table, Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola Brands scored equal scores regarding Design of the product. Again the Rural and Urban Customers doesn't show much difference in perception about the design of the product.

Table –4: Classification of Respondents - Sound

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	399	3.33	49	158	3.22	71	241	3.39
Samsung	120	483	4.02	49	194	3.96	71	289	4.07
Lg	120	481	4.01	49	196	4.00	71	285	4.01
Lenovo	120	498	4.15	49	203	4.14	71	295	4.15
Motorola	120	504	4.20	49	204	4.16	71	300	4.23
Micromax	120	369	3.07	49	157	3.20	71	212	2.99
Others	120	368	3.07	49	157	3.20	71	211	2.97

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

It is clearly evident that Branded mobiles (Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola) have scored almost equal scores, which shows that the customer perception about these brands don't differ much.

On the Urban side, Motorola and Lenovo are competing in terms of Sound. Sony, Micromax and Non Branded mobiles lacking competitiveness in this aspect of the product. The top position in rural customer space is similar to urban customer. This shows that the Rural and Urban customer don't differ in terms of Sound Quality.

Table –5: Classification of Respondents – Price

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	452	3.77	49	174	3.55	71	278	3.92
Samsung	120	481	4.01	49	201	4.10	71	280	3.94
Lg	120	500	4.17	49	207	4.22	71	293	4.13
Lenovo	120	504	4.20	49	203	4.14	71	301	4.24
Motorola	120	499	4.16	49	195	3.98	71	304	4.28
Micromax	120	357	2.98	49	153	3.12	71	204	2.87
Others	120	296	2.47	49	132	2.69	71	164	2.31

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

From the above table, it is clearly evident, except Micromax and Non Branded Mobile, every other mobile scored similar score, showing dissimilarity among the customers. Urban customers gave much larger importance to Samsung, LG and Lenovo model, when comes to price. Least Importance to None Branded and Micromax Brand.

Rural Customers gave nearly equal importance to the all brand except, Micromax and Non Branded mobiles. This is clearly evident, that they don't differ on price terms in choosing the mobile phones.

Table –6: Classification of Respondents - Value for Money

Product	Overall			Urban			Rural		
	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception	N	Total Perception	Average Perception
Sony	120	368	3.07	49	144	2.94	71	224	3.15
Samsung	120	431	3.59	49	177	3.61	71	254	3.58
Lg	120	429	3.57	49	175	3.57	71	254	3.58
Lenovo	120	442	3.68	49	185	3.78	71	257	3.62
Motorola	120	499	4.16	49	195	3.98	71	304	4.28
Micromax	120	472	3.93	49	196	4.00	71	276	3.89
Others	120	409	3.41	49	182	3.71	71	227	3.20

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

From the above table, it is clearly evident that Motorola and Micromax have scored significantly higher score when compared to others.

Motorola, Micromax, Lenovo and Non Branded mobiles has scored nearly equal scores among urban customers, which implies that the urban customers too prefer Non Branded mobiles because for the value for the money.

Rural customers prefer Branded Mobiles like Motorola, Micromax, Lenovo when comes to value.

Table – 7: Fishbone Attitude Model Score

S.No	Company	Without Differentiation	Urban Customers	Rural Customers
1	Sony	35.53	33.78	36.68
2	Samsung	39.07	38.98	39.11
3	LG	40.32	40.47	40.24
4	Lenovo	40.795	40.94	40.695
5	Motorola	41.685	41.02	42.105
6	Micromax	32.065	32.485	31.775
7	Others	30.5	32.23	29.24

Source: Primary Source

Interpretation

From the above table, Motorola, Lenovo and LG has secure maximum perception score among the customers. Least being Non Branded mobiles.

Urban consumers prefer, LG, Lenovo and Motorola products than other branded and non branded products whereas rural customers prefer more branded products when compared to urban customers.

Table: 8 :Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Age	below 20	34	28.3
	21 to 30	39	32.5
	31 to 40	40	33.3
	40 and above	7	5.8
Gender	Male	84	70.0
	Female	36	30.0
Education Qualification	SSLC	20	16.7
	HSC	53	44.2
	UG	39	32.5
	PG	6	5.0
	Illiterate	2	1.7
Geographical Area	Urban	49	40.8
	Rural	71	59.2
Occupation	Private Employee	39	32.5
	Govt Employee	48	40.0
	Self Employed	33	27.5
Income	below 10000	12	10.0
	10001 to 20000	52	43.3
	20001 to 30000	25	20.8
	30001 to 40000	14	11.7
	above 40000	17	14.2

Source : Primary Source

Hypothesis

- H₀₁ : There is no difference in perception of Sony brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₂ : There is no difference in perception of Samsung brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₃ : There is no difference in perception of LG brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₄ : There is no difference in perception of Lenovo brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₅ : There is no difference in perception of Motorola brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₆ : There is no difference in perception of Micromax brand among rural and urban customers.
H₀₇ : There is no difference in perception of Other brand among rural and urban customers.

Table:8: Product wise ANOVA

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sony Perception Score	Between Groups	244.033	1	244.033	9.545	.003
	Within Groups	3016.699	118	25.565		
	Total	3260.731	119			
Samsung Perception Score	Between Groups	.368	1	.368	.015	.904
	Within Groups	2963.599	118	25.115		
	Total	2963.967	119			
LG Perception Score	Between Groups	1.772	1	1.772	.116	.734
	Within Groups	1801.895	118	15.270		
	Total	1803.667	119			
	Between Groups	1.692	1	1.692	.115	.736

Lenovo Perception Score	Within Groups	1743.556	118	14.776		
	Total	1745.248	119			
Motorola Perception Score	Between Groups	35.036	1	35.036	1.968	.163
	Within Groups	2100.212	118	17.798		
	Total	2135.248	119			
Micromax Perception Score	Between Groups	15.254	1	15.254	.314	.576
	Within Groups	5726.894	118	48.533		
	Total	5742.148	119			
Others Perception Score	Between Groups	265.444	1	265.444	8.057	.005
	Within Groups	3887.481	118	32.945		
	Total	4152.925	119			

Interpretation

1. Perception on Sony brand: Since the significance value of sony brand is less than 0.05 (5% LOS), We reject null hypothesis.
2. Perception on Samsung brand: Since the significance value of Samsung brand is greater than 0.05 (5% LOS), We accept null hypothesis.
3. Perception on LG brand: Since the significance value of LG brand is greater than 0.05 (5% LOS), We accept null hypothesis.
4. Perception on Lenovo brand: Since the significance value of Lenovo brand is greater than 0.05 (5% LOS), We accept null hypothesis.
5. Perception on Motorola brand: Since the significance value of Motorola brand is greater than 0.05 (5% LOS), We accept null hypothesis.
6. Perception on Micromax brand: Since the significance value of Micromax brand is greater than 0.05 (5% LOS), We accept null hypothesis.
7. Perception on Other brand: Since the significance value of other brand is less than 0.05 (5% LOS), We reject null hypothesis.

Findings

- From the table it is clearly understood that, Lenovo scored 4.20, even though Lenovo scored highest score, there is not much deviation among top four in this category (Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola) in terms of Durability. Non Branded scored the lowest.
- From the table, it is clearly evident that Urban customers has given highest rank to LG, But not much deviation among Samsung, LG and Lenovo.
- From the table, it is clearly understood, that rural customer unable to distinguish the brand between LG, Lenovo, Motorola.
- From the table, Lenovo Brand and LG Brand scored highest scored on Picture clarity. Others fall short. Micromax and Non-branded Scored the lowest scored on picture clarity.
- From the table, Lenovo Brand and LG Brand scored highest scored on Picture clarity and there is not much difference between these brands. Lowest being Micromax and Non Branded mobile phones.
- From the table, Lenovo Brand and LG Brand scored highest scored on Picture clarity and there is not much difference between these brands. Lowest being Micromax and Non Branded mobile phones. It clearly shows there's not much difference in perception among rural and urban customers on picture clarity.
- From the table, Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola Brands scored equal scores regarding Design of the product.
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- From the table, it is clearly evident that Branded mobiles(Samsung, LG, Lenovo and Motorola) have scored almost equal scores, which shows that the customers perception about these brands don't differ much.
- From the table, it is clearly understood that, Motorola and Lenovo are competing in terms of Sound. Sony, Micromax and Non Branded mobiles lacking in sound of the product.
- From the table, it is understood that brand, which occupied the top position in urban customers space is similar to rural customers. This shows that the Rural and Urban customers don't differ in terms Sound Quality.
- From the table, it is clearly evident that the urban consumers prefer, LG, Lenovo and Motorola products than other branded and Non branded products.
- From the table, Motorola, Lenovo and LG has secure maximum perception score among the customers. Least being Non Branded mobiles.



- From the table, it is clearly evident that Rural customers prefer more branded products when compared to urban customers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to study the influence of brand name on the consumer decision making process and to investigate the effect of external factors on consumer behavior by comparing the choices of two different consumer bases- rural and urban. Consumer behavior is a conditioned response to external events; therefore the region and surrounding environment also have some impact on choice of consumer. To conduct the research, a questionnaire administered survey has been conducted among 120 respondents of urban and rural regions and the data revealed that brand name has strong influence on purchase decision. In rural areas, pricing is given more consideration than brand name, while in urban areas, brand name overtakes pricing factor. From the study it is also clear that well known mobile phone brands are equally popular among the people of both regions and the consumers trust the brand name. The company which offers a wide range of options to choose from is more likely to successfully gain popularity and capture market share equally well in urban as well as rural areas. The study highlights the key elements which influence the consumer behavior and can prove to be valuable to mobile phone companies as well as market analysts.

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