A STUDY ON CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION ON NOKIA PHONES IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study on the consumers perception on Nokia phone in Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu, India is done keeping in mind the Nokia market trends in the district and also what drives the consumers to buy Nokia product in today's time. This research only moves on an aim – the consumers' perception of the brand Nokia in Kanyakumari District. The main objective of the study are to explore the Nokia market trends in the district and to find its sustainability as an exclusive showroom, to bring out the factors that from their perception of Nokia and finally the consumer's perception of the brand Nokia in the district. The analysis has come out with major findings in all aspects of the brand like buying behaviour with respect to age, occupation and educational qualification of the respondents. The analysis has also created a link between the various factors like cost, location, and comparison of Nokia with other company brands available in the market. With respect to the consumer perception it has been found out that they have a positive feedback towards the brand and hence there is ample scope for the sustainability of a exclusive shop in the district of Kanyakumari.

Keywords: *Buying Behaviour, Perception about brand, Trend of Nokia Phone.*

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INTRODUCTION

Nokia's phones are loved by a lot of people and its name is synonymous with reliability. It is one of the biggest brands in Telecommunications Industry globally. It has its presence in every segment of the market. It offers the cheapest of phones with the most basic features as well as high-end swanky phones with all the latest features. Nokia's prices are usually competitor based, in such a way as, they try to keep their prices a bit lower than those of the closest competitors, but not as low as the "smallest" competition as consumers do not mind paying the extra money for the "extra quality" they will receive with a well known brand, such as Nokia.

Nokia phones are generally sold at all established mobile phone dealers, although they are also sold at other retailers and other electrical suppliers. The products are only sold in the electrical suppliers and store other then dedicated phone dealerships after the introductory period so the phones can remain limited edition, as this will encourage younger consumers to buy them. Nokia tend to promote the new technologies and mobile devices they create using one big advertising campaign that focuses on a singular technology instead of each individual handset so they can appeal to a lot of different markets with one campaign. When the phones came out they were big and bulky and quite unattractive but now they are all quite sleek and stylish with phones now they are small and slim. Most of the phones produced nowadays have accessories that consumers must buy with them (carry cases, hands free kits and in-car chargers) these generate Nokia a lot of profit, as they are very high priced. The company of Nokia presently offers various models of phones including Nokia 7280, Nokia 5100, Nokia 7710, Nokia 1610, Nokia 5110, Nokia 6600, Nokia 3110, Nokia N 77, Nokia N 75, Nokia N 71, Nokia 6131, Nokia N 73, Nokia N 70, Nokia N 91.

SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

Kanyakumari district in the state of Tamil nadu is purposely selected for the present study since, the district, is familiar to the researchers. This district takes its name from the town of Kanyakumari at the southern tip of India. The district included four taluks of Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Thovalai and Agasteeswaram with a total area of 1684 square kilometers. As of 2011 census the district had a population of 1,863,174 and 83% of the district is urbanized. Nagercoil is the administrative headquarters of this district. It ranks first in literacy among other districts in Tamil Nadu.

PERCEPTION

Perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of the environment by organising and interpreting sensory information. All perception involves signals in the nervous system, which in turn result from physical stimulation of the sense organs.

CONSUMER PERCEPTION

Companies that are able to communicate a certain meaning (e.g. prestige) through the appearance of a product design can create a competitive advantage in the market and increase the product's chance of success. According to Krippendorf (1989), the design of products should be understandable or meaningful to someone. The meaning, appearance of a product helps consumers assess the product on functional, aesthetic, symbolic or ergonomic motives. These motives play a role in the overall product appraisal.

BRIEF LITERATURE SURVEY

This part of the paper attempts to make a review of research articles in the related field of the study undertaken. A focused review of the available literature helped us to get in depth of the topic and to understand the contributions of others as well as to identify the research gap.

Bitta (2002) observes the term customer as typically used to refer to someone who regularly purchase from a particular store or company. The term, consumer, more generally refers to any one engaging, acquiring, using or disposing or goods and services.

According to a famous web portal (www.brint.com) the components of customer value are simple. Product quality, service quality, price and image shape a customer's perception value. A firm's strategy and performance in these areas are integrated by customers' perception of value proposition. This is particularly important for first time customers. In this highly competitive business environment, the customers will compare the perceived value of competitive offerings. The ultimate 'winner' in the battle for the customers' pocketbook is the firm that delivers the 'best value' from the customer's perspective.

In the study by Gladwin (2003), the Lancaster model of consumer demand is referred as the product attributes model to evaluate brand positioning. This model assumes that consumer choice is based on the characteristics of a brand.

According to Mason & Bequette (1998) perception of product performance are more important than actual performance. The authors opined that marketing managers should know the attributes that consumers expect in a product and positive or negative attributes help develop and promote a successful product.

These articles provided insight to the topic and no significant research work is done in consumer perception of Nokia brand in Kanyakumari district.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the demographic profile of the sample respondents in Kanyakumari District
- To evaluate the consumers general buying behaviour of cell phones
- To assess consumer perception of Nokia brand
- To understand the trend of Nokia market in the district

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present descriptive study aims to understand consumer perception of Nokia cell phone at Kanyakumari District in Tamilnadu, India. Primary data for the study was collected by means of questionnaire survey conducted in Kanyakumari District. A total of 125 questionnaires were delivered to prospective respondents of which 112 questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 90 percent. Convenience and judgement sampling techniques were adopted to form the sample. The statistical techniques used to interpret the collected data were percentages, mean, standard deviation, correlation etc. Like RT five point scale, ranging from excellent to poor were used to get responses for some questions. The results help to understand the general perception on Nokia cell phones in Kanyakumari District and comparative position of Nokia and other brands.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Personal profile:

In this section the researcher analysed the age profile, educational profile and occupational profile of the respondents. Age profile shows that 40% of the respondents belong to the age of 30 -35 years, 34% of the respondents in the age group 25 – 30 years, which together accumulated three quarters of the total sample size. The average age of the sample respondents has been estimated as 30.1 years with a standard deviation of 4.39. The numerical value of standard deviation shows that there is not much variability of age across the number of samples. There is also general perception that people in the young age or middle age are more enthusiastic and involved in sports activities.

The educational background was done in order to find out how they perceive the product and whether it makes any impact on their buying judgement. The school students are not included in this particular research because of age factor. According to the survey majority of the respondents (44%) have a high educational background, with post graduate degree holders such as Master of Philosophy, Doctor of philosophy, Master of Engineering. It is followed by a class of graduates working in different fields comprising 38% of the sample respondents. The least 10% of the respondents are other category as diploma holders which includes polytechnic, diploma in pharmacy, catering technology, etc.

Around 44% of the respondents belong to student category, pursuing graduation, post graduation and diploma courses in various institutions and 32% are working professionals. Only 24% of respondents are self employed. This shows that the perception and attitude of the respondents are dependable for deriving conclusions of the study.

General Buying Behaviour cell phones:

After analysing the demographic profile of the respondents, this section deals with the second objective of the study. Regarding the buying trend of cell phones or the frequency of purchase it was found that 37% of the respondents buy cell phone once in three years on an average while 31% of the respondents buy once in two years. This is followed by 24% who prefer to change phone once in a year. The buying frequency is correlated with certain personal variables to understand its mutuality among certain variables. The correlation between age profile and buying frequency showed a negligible positive correlation 0.119. This might be due to the dominance of young and middle aged people in the chosen sample

The cost factor plays important role in consumer buying decision. The results of the survey show that 50% of the respondents do not prefer buying costly cell phone. Around 30% of the mobile users are ready to buy costly phones occasionally, while only 16% go for it frequently and a negligible 4% do not mind purchasing costly phone very frequently. This clearly depicts that majority of the respondents' buying decision of cell phones is influenced by price. The correlation co-efficient of age and cost factor shows a negligible negative value (0.266) implying no significant association between these variables.

In Kanyakumari district most of the cell phone retail shops are located in long distance towns. Question was asked to find out the attitude of consumers to travel distances for purchasing cell phones. Of the total respondents, a major 60% would never go the distance to purchase their preferred model. Around 32% of the respondents afford to travel long distance for chosen brand sometimes. Only 8% do not mind covering distance stores and they frequently visit the long distance retail shops or showrooms to get value for the purchase decision. However the majority are not so keen to run around for the preferred model or brand.

Consumers look for different parameters while purchasing a cell phone. The respondents were asked on the various factors, that usually they look for when buying a phone such as comfort, style, price and availability. A major 56% of the users have rated comfort (ease of use) as the most important factor. The second important factor influencing buying decision is price as revealed by the respondents. Only 16% prefer style of the cell phones and give consideration to this factor. Very few of the respondents attach preference for the availability of cell phones.

Perception about the brand Nokia:

The third objective of the study was to assess the consumer perception on the brand 'Nokia'. The respondents were asked how they would get information regarding the models of Nokia that were launched into the market. This also helped to analyse their perception on the brand of Nokia. A significant 40% of the respondents got new product information over the internet. This is followed by 30% of the respondents receiving information through television, followed by 16% through press, news papers, magazines, trade and technical journals etc. Very few depend on friends, relatives, salesmen and window display to get information on Nokia.

Nokia has variety of models, which has been a major reason for success in the global market. Respondents were asked about the comparative position of other common brands in the market. Around 37% of the respondents would prefer to buy Samsung cell phones in case the Nokia product is not available in the shop or showrooms. This is followed by 26% of the customers choosing Blackberry, another renowned cell phone. Sony Ericson was next preferred by 21% of the respondents. Only a small section 16% of respondents prefer to buy other brands (of China and India) if preferred Nokia models are not available.

To understand the reasons for a large market share of Nokia, the respondents were asked to rate various attributes on a five point scale ranging from excellent to poor. The ratings were given as 1= excellent, 2= very good, 3= good, 4=average and 5=poor on brand name, durability, comfort, style and price.

Ranking	Attributes	Weighted Average
1	Brand Name	1.836
2	Durability	2.24
3	Comfort	2.46
4	Style	3.2
5	Price	3.7

Table 1: Personal profile

Age	**%**	**Qualification**	**%**	**Occupation**	**%**
20 – 25	10	School level	8	Students	44
25 – 30	34	Graduates	38	Self Employed	24
30 – 35	40	Post Graduates	44	Others	32
35 – 40	16	Others	10		

Table 2: General buying behaviour

Buying Trend	%	Costly phone	%	Long distance	%	Product Features	%
Twice in a year	8	Never	50	Never	60	Price	20
Once in a year	24	Occasionally	30	Occasionally	32	Comfort	56
Once in 2 years	31	Frequently	16	Frequently	4	Availability	8
Once in 3 years	37	Very frequently	4	Very frequently	4	Style	16

Table 3: Nokia market trend

Market trend	%	Buying Options	%	Exclusive Showroom	%
Highly unsatisfactory	Nil	Nokia Showroom	14	Strongly disagree	Nil
Unsatisfactory	20	Online	20	Disagree	34
Neutral	10	Other shops	66	Neutral	20
Satisfactory	40			Agree	36
Highly satisfactory	30			Strongly agree	10

Table 4: Perception

Knowledge	%	Alternatives	%
Internet	45	Sony Ericsson	21
Television	30	Blackberry	26
Radio	5	Samsung	37
Press	16	Others	16
Others	4		

The weighted arithmetic mean scores suggests that the prime reason for selecting Nokia is the brand name associated with it. The next in ranking is the durability of the product with a mean score 2.24 followed by comfort of the usage as the third preferred parameter of Nokia compared to other brands. Even if the price gets the least rank, the mean score of 3.7 for price shows majority of the respondents have given good to average rating for this aspect. This further implies that Nokia users are not highly satisfied with price factor of cell phones.

Trend of cell phone market in Kanyakumari District:

This section deals with market trend of Nokia in the district chosen in the study and the opinion of the respondents regarding the suitability of launching an exclusive Nokia showroom in the district.

Majority (40%) of the respondents are satisfied with the existing market trend of Nokia in the district. Another 30% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the growing market for Nokia. Very few are not satisfied with the market trend in the district. This clearly shows that a vast majority of the Nokia users are quite satisfied with the trend of Nokia market in the chosen district.

To analyse further the cell phone market trends in the district, respondents were enquired regarding various shopping possibilities or alternatives. People generally buy cell phones either from Nokia showrooms, other cell phone shops or online stores. Of the total respondents a significant 66% prefer to buy cell phone from other mobile phone shops rather than an exclusive outlet of Nokia. This is followed by 20% who resort to online purchase. Only small group (14%) of respondents prefer purchasing Nokia cell phone from the exclusive showrooms. It can be noted that the district does not have sufficient exclusive Nokia showrooms.

One of the objectives of the study is to identify whether the consumers would prefer to have an exclusive showroom for Nokia. Majority of the respondents acknowledged the idea of an exclusive showroom in the district. According to the survey more than half (36% and 18% of them agree and strongly agree respectively to the idea) of the sample respondents welcome the notion of having exclusive show room for Nokia. Around 34% of the respondents disagree with it. This may be seen contradictory to their opinion of buying habit revealed in the previous section (majority buy from any retail outlet of cell phones). This is because presently they are not given much option from where to buy Nokia phones.

CONCLUSION

This study has brought about certain unexplored trends regarding Nokia cell phones in Kanyakumari district. Majority of the respondents are young adults pursuing academics or professional courses and technology savvy. Most of them look for cell phones with reasonable price. Comfort plays a vital role in selecting a brand for cell phone. The data analysis establishes the brand superiority of Nokia, in relation to other brands. The respondents are quite satisfied with the durability, comfort and style of Nokia cell phones. There is a general positive outlook towards the availability of exclusive showroom of Nokia in the district. Nokia even though being a global giant still has not captured the complete Kanyakumari district market as of now. Hence the company should come out with better marketing strategies specially pricing strategies in order to update the customers more about the new models and exclusive features.

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