A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS LAPTOPS IN TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT

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Abstract

Aim of this study is to draw the betterment of the customers using Laptops to find the level of their preference, perception and satisfaction. It was collected with the aid of formal structured interview schedule, with personal face-to-face interaction. The schedule covers personal data, economic conditions, and satisfaction towards charges and services suggestions from the consumers. The researcher has selected the sample to the maximum of 600 consumers from five taluks viz., Trichy, Musiri, Manapparai, Lalgudi and Thuraiyur, Out of all the five taluks selected for the study purpose, 120 consumers are selected from each taluk for the study.

Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues; designs the method for collecting information; manages and implements the data collection process; analysis the results; and communicates the findings and their implications.

Key words: Consumer Performance, Psychology, Brand Preference, Strategy, etc.

Introduction

Consumer is the principal a prior of business. The efficiency with which a free market system of enterprise operates, in the last analysis, depends upon the extent of consumer understanding possessed by the business community. A business community that is ignorant of consumer preferences cannot possibly fulfill its obligations in a meaningful and responsive manner. This is exactly the reason why consumer behavior is given importance in modern marketing.

Marketing research is a systematic and objective approach to the development and provision of the information for the marketing management decision-making process. Knowledge of consumer behavior would render immense help for planning and implementing marketing strategies. For example, buyer's reactions to a firm's marketing strategy have great impact on the firm's success.

In addition, the study of consumer behavior helps in developing the strategies under noted:

- Selection and segmentation of target markets.
- Devising appropriate marketing strategies most relevant to the target market segment.
- Evaluation of marketing programmers, strategies and tactics.
- Assessing the trends of change and preparing marketing plans to suit the future changes.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MARKETING

The study of consumers helps firms and organizations improve their marketing strategies by understanding issues such as how

- The psychology of how consumers think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives (e.g., brands, products, and retailers);
- The psychology of how the consumer is influenced by his or her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media);
- The behavior of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions;
- Limitations in consumer knowledge or information processing abilities influence decisions and marketing outcome;
- How consumer motivation and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer; and
- How marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer.

MODEL OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & **PSYCHOLOGY OF MARKETING**
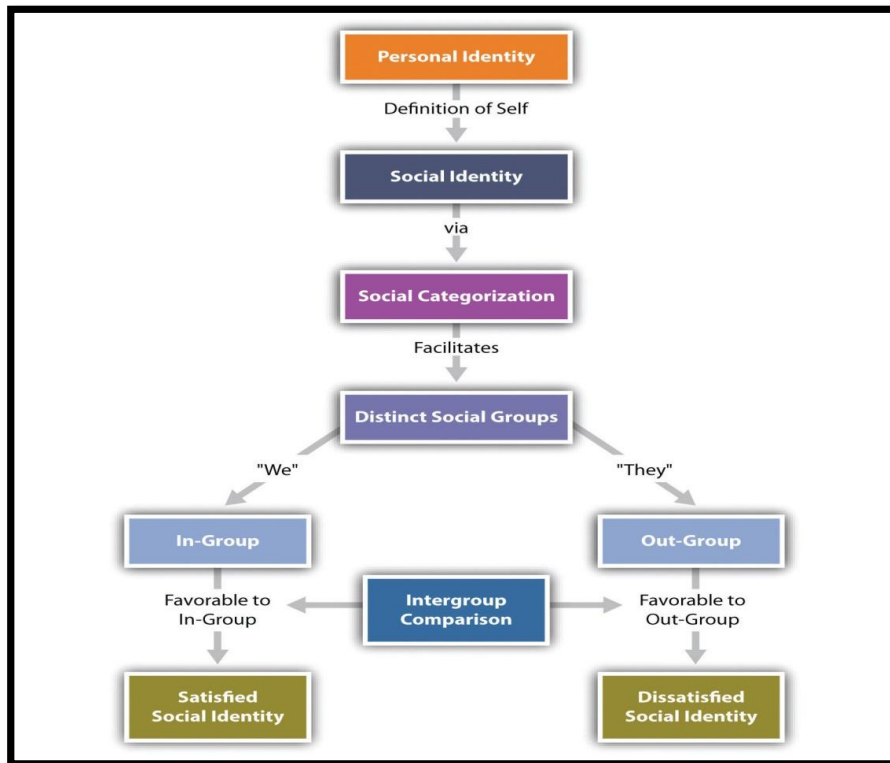
Statement of The Problem

In the modern business, it is very important to get the satisfaction from the consumers, which increase the volume of profit. So, only when the consumers are satisfied with a particular product or service, they will consume again that particular service. So without any satisfaction of a particular service we can say that consumers will not go for that service.

Hence the researcher has taken the problem that the consumers are satisfied or dissatisfied with the sales, service and supply of the Laptops and other accessories for their continuous usage.

The suppliers have been considering the customers of different types and extending their full-fledged services. This type of products are admired the customers and get satisfied of the

Laptops. Though there are varieties available, how the consumer choose and how is it supplied by the dealers are the major problems of the research which would not be available earlier. With this as a research gap the study is carried out significantly.

This study is fully focused on the consumer preference towards Laptops and other accessories in Tiruchirappalli district. The importance of this study is to determine the values of the customer based services of the suppliers of the Laptops and other accessories.

Objectives Of The Study

The following are the research objectives framed by the researcher to study the consumer preference of Laptops in Tiruchirappalli district.

- To study the types of Laptops available in the market.
- To find out the satisfaction of the consumers towards the charges, the quality, the provisions, the after sales service and others by the dealers.
- To find the level of consumer satisfaction towards the Laptops and other accessories at usage.
- To offer various suggestions for the improvement of the supply and service of Laptops.

Review of Literature

Marketing Management by Philip Kotler The customer is always considered as a core of business activity. Author discussed in this book that marketing is only one factor in attracting and keeping customers. Peter F. Drucker observed that a company's Marketing Management by Philip Kotler: The customer is always considered as a core of business activity. Author discussed in this book that marketing is only one factor in attracting and keeping customers. Peter F. Drucker observed that a company's.

Consumer Behaviour by Leslie Lazar and Schiffman The authors suggested consumer behavior as individual differs as from group. The family decision for a purchase decision is entirely different from individual decision making. The authors discussed various variables that affect consumer purchase decision. The book focused on family life cycle and various needs of consumer during different life stages. The family decision making process as a group decision making is elaborated and it is recommended to segment the market according to family need hierarchy.

Ray, S (2009), The study highlights the adoptability of Wi-Fi connectivity as a necessity in Hospitality, Airlines, Schools, Colleges and various other places. It also notifies that laptop market is boosting due to price reduction and ultra-slicks laptops.

Rungchat Chompu-inwai1 and Toni L. Doolen (2006), This research focused on studying the impact of using laptops in a required undergraduate-level engineering course at Oregon State University (OSU) in Winter 2004 and Winter 2005. The individual usage of laptops with wireless capability both inside and outside classrooms in Winter 2005 was found to positively impact student learning outcomes and assist in the achievement of class learning objectives. No significant differences in attitudes were found in either year. Student attitudes towards laptops and the usage of laptops were unchanged by the introduction of laptops in both years.

Moses, P. et al (2008) The study focus on empowering the teachers with the latest technology through training and concluded that laptop usage in the study as an instructional tool is an effective media to enhance students learning.

Kay, R. H. and Lauricella,S (2011) highlights the impact of unstructured vs. structured use of laptops for 177 university students and revealed that structured use of laptops resulted in

significantly more time spent on note taking and academic activities and significantly less time spent on sending personal emails, instant messages and playing games during class.

Fried, C.B. (2008) Examine in his study the impact of laptop usage in the class and noticed a favourable improvement in students working.

Grimes,D.& Warshauer, **(2008)** M. also conducted a study on the students of three different schools of California by mean of one-to-one laptop program and found that in second after introducing this programe the students perform better than non-laptop user students.

Vuojärvi, H (2010) In this study qualitative interview data with twenty students (identified and selected by quantitative survey) was analyzed using the grounded theory approach during which a multi-aspect domestication process was identified. Results highlight the importance of a structured way of organizing laptop initiatives in universities. In a survey on 200 students conducted in winter 2005, a slight replacement was notified in student's behaviour. Students start preferring Laptop computer in place of desktop due to its portability feature.

Punyatoya,P. **(2002)** This article presents a brief literature review of the concept of brand personality and its relationship to consumer brand preference and purchase intention.

Mellon, C. (2010), Present a study on laptop usage rate inside and outside the classroom and the respective effect of laptop usage in improving student's performance level and improving work quality.

Research Design

Since the primary objective of the study is to identify the consumer preference, it was decided to use descriptive research design. The purpose of this research is description of the state of affairs, as it exists at present.

The characteristics of this method are that the researcher has to control over the variables, the researcher can give only the report what has happened and what is happening.

Limitations of The Study

The following are the limitations that are encountered by the researcher during the period of the research work and that too affected the research process in very many dimensions:
- Due to time constraint the sample size was reduced to 600 consumers.
- The survey was conducted in the selected areas of Tiruchirappalli district.
- Some of respondents seemed to be reluctant and where casually answered the questions.
- Some of the respondents were not interested to mention the actual data.
- The survey took a long period because the respondents using laptops were not available easily due to the unknown area, busy schedule and work nature of the people, commitments and other predicaments, etc.

Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1 Demographic Profile Vs Brands of Laptops Usually bought

Ho – There is no significant association between the age of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use.

H1 – There is significant association between the age of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use.

			Labtop Brand					Total
			Lenova	HCL	Dell	HP	Others	
Age	Below 30 yrs	Count	61	80	24	37	8	210
		% within Age	29.0%	38.1%	11.4%	17.6%	3.8%	100.0%
		% within Labtop Brand	34.7%	36.4%	27.3%	43.5%	25.8%	35.0%
		% of Total	10.2%	13.3%	4.0%	6.2%	1.3%	35.0%
	30-40 yrs	Count	34	42	15	18	6	115
		% within Age	29.6%	36.5%	13.0%	15.7%	5.2%	100.0%
		% within Labtop Brand	19.3%	19.1%	17.0%	21.2%	19.4%	19.2%
		% of Total	5.7%	7.0%	2.5%	3.0%	1.0%	19.2%
	40-50 yrs	Count	53	69	36	21	8	187
		% within Age	28.3%	36.9%	19.3%	11.2%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within Labtop Brand	30.1%	31.4%	40.9%	24.7%	25.8%	31.2%
		% of Total	8.8%	11.5%	6.0%	3.5%	1.3%	31.2%
	Above 50 yrs	Count	28	29	13	9	9	88
		% within Age	31.8%	33.0%	14.8%	10.2%	10.2%	100.0%
		% within Labtop Brand	15.9%	13.2%	14.8%	10.6%	29.0%	14.7%
		% of Total	4.7%	4.8%	2.2%	1.5%	1.5%	14.7%
Total		Count	176	220	88	85	31	600
		% within Age	29.3%	36.7%	14.7%	14.2%	5.2%	100.0%
		% within Labtop Brand	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	29.3%	36.7%	14.7%	14.2%	5.2%	100.0%

Table 2 Chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.541[a]	12	.268
Likelihood Ratio	13.611	12	.326
Fisher's Exact Test	.[c]		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.012	1	.914
N of Valid Cases	600		

The table value for x2 is 14.541 at 12 degrees of freedom for 5 per cent significance level. The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence it is found that there is no significance in the association of the age of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use. Thus, it is concluded that the age of the respondents would not help them to keep

intact of their purchase of laptops for their use. Hence it may be said that they would not be influenced by the age with the purchase of the brands of the laptops rather the conditions of market and the efficiency of the brands available in the market. It is also concluded that the age of the respondents will not be the factor to influence the brands what they purchase for their usage.

Table 3 Occupation Vs Brands of Laptops Usually bought

Ho – There is no significant association between the occupation of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use.

H1 – There is significant association between the occupation of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use.

			Occupation					Total
			Business	Govt.	Private	Student	others	
Laptop Brand	Lenova	Count	26	41	22	40	47	176
		% within Laptop Brand	14.8%	23.3%	12.5%	22.7%	26.7%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	21.8%	33.1%	25.0%	33.9%	31.1%	29.3%
		% of Total	4.3%	6.8%	3.7%	6.7%	7.8%	29.3%
	HCL	Count	46	40	30	50	54	220
		% within Laptop Brand	20.9%	18.2%	13.6%	22.7%	24.5%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	38.7%	32.3%	34.1%	42.4%	35.8%	36.7%
		% of Total	7.7%	6.7%	5.0%	8.3%	9.0%	36.7%
	Dell	Count	16	21	15	14	22	88
		% within Laptop Brand	18.2%	23.9%	17.0%	15.9%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	13.4%	16.9%	17.0%	11.9%	14.6%	14.7%
		% of Total	2.7%	3.5%	2.5%	2.3%	3.7%	14.7%
	HP	Count	22	14	17	11	21	85
		% within Laptop Brand	25.9%	16.5%	20.0%	12.9%	24.7%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	18.5%	11.3%	19.3%	9.3%	13.9%	14.2%
		% of Total	3.7%	2.3%	2.8%	1.8%	3.5%	14.2%
	Others	Count	9	8	4	3	7	31
		% within Laptop Brand	29.0%	25.8%	12.9%	9.7%	22.6%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	7.6%	6.5%	4.5%	2.5%	4.6%	5.2%
		% of Total	1.5%	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%	1.2%	5.2%

Total	Count	119	124	88	118	151	600
	% within Laptop Brand	19.8%	20.7%	14.7%	19.7%	25.2%	100.0%
	% within Occupation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	19.8%	20.7%	14.7%	19.7%	25.2%	100.0%

Table 4 Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.326^a	16	.365	.000
Likelihood Ratio	17.693	16	.342	.000
Fisher's Exact Test	.000			.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.422^b	1	.035	.000
N of Valid Cases	600			

The table value for x2 is 17.326 at 16 degrees of freedom for 5 per cent significance level. The calculated value is more than the table value. Hence it is found that there is significance in the association of the occupation of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use. Thus, it is concluded that the occupation of the respondents would help them to keep intact of their purchase of laptops for their use. Hence it may be said that they would be influenced by the occupation with the purchase of the brands of the laptops rather the conditions of market and the efficiency of the brands available in the market. It is also concluded that the occupation of the respondents will be the factor to influence the brands what they purchase for their usage.

Table 5 One way Anova between the period of usage and utility of accessories

Ho – There is no significant variation in the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories.
H1 – There is a significant variation in the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories.

Opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories	Mean	S.D	SS	DF	MS	Statistical inference
Between Groups			7.913	4	1.978	F=1.201 .309>0.05 Not Significant
Below 1yr	3.09	1.348				
1 to 2yrs	3.38	1.273				
2 to 3 yrs	3.34	1.319				
3 to 4 yrs	3.28	1.214				
Above 5 yrs	3.56	1.249				
Within Groups			979.752	55	1.647	

The table of test shows the significance of the variation between the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. The calculated value of F is 1.201 between 4 and 55 degrees of freedom between and within the groups. The table value for 4 and 55 degrees of freedom is 2.54 at 5 per cent significance level. The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant variation in the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. Thus, it is said that the period of the usage of the respondents will not be influencing their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. It is also suggested that the dealers are to concentrate more on providing the good quality of service in the market to have and keep the satisfaction of the customers so that it would increase the sales margin and cover the course to achieve the right profit margin.

Table 6 Correlation

Correlation between the average income per month of the respondents Vs the factors that influence the sales of the respondents

Correlations			Average Income per month	Factors that influence the sales of the respondents
Average Income per month	Pearson Correlation		1	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.926
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products		1154.065	-7.515
	Covariance		1.927	-.013
	N		600	600
	Bootstrap[a]	Bias	0	.000
		Std. Error	0	.000
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.004
			Upper	1	-.004
factors that influence the sales of the respondents	Pearson Correlation		-.004	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.926	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products		-7.515	3406.798
	Covariance		-.013	5.687
	N		600	600
	Bootstrap[a]	Bias	.000	0
		Std. Error	.000	0
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.004	1
			Upper	-.004	1

In the above table, the correlation was done for the average income per month of the respondents and the factors that influence the sales of the respondents. There was a positive correlation between the average incomes per month of the respondents and the factors that influence the sales of the respondents in the cases of more popular. Hence, the dealers are to concentrate more on the reduction of price and others to sell more laptops for the consumer satisfaction.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTION & CONCLUSION

FINDINGS:

- The table value for x2 is 14.541 at 12 degrees of freedom for 5 per cent significance level. The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence it is found that there is no significance in the association of the age of the respondents and the brands of the laptops they bought for their use. Thus, it is concluded that the age of the respondents would not help them to keep intact of their purchase of laptops for their use. Hence it may be said that they would not be influenced by the age with the purchase of the brands of the laptops rather the conditions of market and the efficiency of the brands available in the market. It is also concluded that the age of the respondents will not be the factor to influence the brands what they purchase for their usage.

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- The table of test shows the significance of the variation between the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. The calculated value of F is 1.201 between 4 and 55 degrees of freedom between and within the groups. The table value for 4 and 55 degrees of freedom is 2.54 at 5 per cent significance level. The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant variation in the period of the usage of the respondents and their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. Thus, it is said that the period of the usage of the respondents will not be influencing their opinion on the utility of Laptop compared to other Accessories. It is also suggested that the dealers are to concentrate more on providing the good quality of service in the market to have and keep the satisfaction of the customers so that it would increase the sales margin and cover the course to achieve the right profit margin.

- In the above table, the correlation was done for the average income per month of the respondents and the factors that influence the sales of the respondents. There was a positive correlation between the average incomes per month of the respondents and the factors that influence the sales of the respondents in the cases of more popular. Hence, the dealers are to concentrate more on the reduction of price and others to sell more laptops for the consumer satisfaction.

Suggestion

- The researcher has carefully analyzed the situations wherein the laptops are sold by the dealers and the consumers are interested in the buying the laptops frequently. On the basis of these, the researcher has furnished the following recommendations for the benefit of both dealers and the consumers:

- The laptop brand manufacturers can focus on developing the important features found in this study and make their brands successful with their consumers when they come

to purchase the laptops. Brand preference for laptop purchase can be increased by focusing on these aspects.

- The dealers should strive towards building the image by strengthening their sales and marketing commitment for getting satisfied of the customers, which is important for every business particularly for the electronic and other relevant accessories sales the dealers are required to keep in-tact the customers towards the products available at an affordable price.

- The Consumers are Interested in buying the branded laptops for their official as well as the personal use. In this regard, they are suggested to go for the right agency of the specific company for availing the services continuously.

- It is also found that there is no significant relationship between the laptop choice and the gender of the respondents. The customers decide on the basis of their requirements, the purchase of the laptops. Hence, it is advisable to suit the customers' needs and need based supply of the laptops by the branded manufacturers.

- Special promotional activities should be announced on festival periods so as to gather rush on those days and attract the more number of customers. To increase patronage at these electronic stores CRM activities have to be improvised. The first major value which the customers perceive very important for the showrooms to provide is the product choice. With large variety of those products available under one roof, the urban customer can fulfill most of their needs in one shopping trip and avoid making frequent trips to dealer outlets. The shop amenities may attract customers in the sales environment. So the sales stores have to take care of their store amenities in order to increase the number of customers.

Conclusion

In the present study the consumers look for products with higher specifications, the faithful laptop is starting to witness a bit of a revival in the industry. Brand new laptops were unveiled, all with competitive prices helping to increase their sales, outshining smaller tablets. With customers' demands for faster download speeds and streaming increasing, the laptops seem to fit the bill over tablets. Consumers are also beginning to look to laptops for their portability benefits, as charger wires are used less frequently thanks to longer lasting battery life. Plus, laptops have more powerful processors and technology embedded within that is similar to a personal computer.

The present study attempted to explore the demographic factors that influence the decisions of the customers on purchase of the laptops, the selection and satisfaction of the same in Tiruchirappalli. The study concludes that demographic factors such as age, income, gender and education are having significant role in the product selection. Shopper groups mainly vary in choosing a product based on their significance for patronage factors of a shop or dealer.

Consumers first choose the equipment and then move in to particular aspects where they can save time, money and effort. Hence, retaining customer allegiance to a particular sale condition is posed as a major task. To conclude, the Indian consumers are more concern about service quality, convenience, product quality and availability of new products. Thus, the study provides some insights on factors that could be important in managing customer satisfaction. First, the dealers need to enhance product quality and store convenience to improve customer affinity. Second, they must assure quality and availability of new products to enhance customer satisfaction for a long tenure of the business trends. This shall also be

supported by the manufacturers of the electronic goods and accessories consistently for the specific products like laptops and the accessories for the laptops, so that it would satisfy the customers as well as increase the sales and profit.

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