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A Study on Laptop Brand Preference in B- Schools

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ABSTRACT

The dramatic technological revolution that has taken place in the last decade makes it imperative for students to emerge from their undergraduate education technologically proficient, comfortable with technology, and ready to pursue their chosen fields. Computers, like pencils and notebooks, have become an integral part of the college experience. The objective of the study is to understand the main factors influencing purchase of a laptop. The study also looked into the most widely used laptop brands among students and made an attempt to evaluate the post purchase behaviour of the respondents which helped to reach certain inference which is detailed in the interpretation and findings. The research type was descriptive in nature. The research instrument used was a questionnaire which was designed to capture the main factors influencing laptop purchase. The respondents where 193 students randomly chosen from different B-schools.

KEYWORDS : Laptop purchase, laptop brands, laptop preference

INTRODUCTION

Mobile computing has become highly popular in the last decade, and advances in computer and mobile device technology allow users to meet their computing needs from every place at any time. Following the success of desktop computers, laptop computers have become highly popular as portable versions of desktops with the full functionality of desktop computing and the portability that allows users to carry them anywhere.

The dramatic technological revolution that has taken place in the last decade makes it imperative for students to emerge from their undergraduate education technologically proficient, comfortable with technology, and ready to pursue their chosen fields. Computers, like pencils and notebooks, have become an integral part of the college experience. In the last five years there has been an emerging national trend to require laptop computers. A laptop computer requirement can be extremely beneficial to students in B-schools.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hoskins (2005) in his article "how to choose the best student laptop" states that the preference for laptops are being replaced by notebook and this has become the emerging trend due to various reasons like less price, affordability, portability etc. Another reason for these preferences for laptops and notebooks is the internet, which acts as the 2nd teacher with a collective knowledge on this planet. Even parents consider this as a perfect learning for students. There are various determinants on which they go for a laptop. Those factors are like portability, convenience, tough, powerfulness, affordability, size, sturdy, connections, technical specs, battery life, price and laptop security.

Dede (2005) proposes that advances in IT are reshaping students learning styles and new generations of students are developing neomillennial learning styles through immersion in virtual environments and augmented realities. The neomillennial learning style is characterized by social constructivist and experiential learning.

Park (2006) in his article says that students preferred Dell and HP initially due to their reasonable pricing and good choices available within the brands. But these days' apples are equally affordable and they now use Intel's Duo core chips like Dell and HP and many are going for apple.

Rockman (2007) States that laptop is changing the attitude of the student and they consider laptop as a personal environment for learning. Pride of ownership and more individualized approach of learning are two benefits for students in 1:1 schools. Students in laptop programs often have a greater level of autonomy, independence and responsibility rather than they ever had before.

Hariprasad and Philip (2008) did a comparative study on the laptop preference with competitive brands. The study also aims at studying the various determinants of choosing a particular brand of laptop in comparison with various other brands available in the market. The study concludes that consumer generally give preference for the performance of the system as it's a high involvement product.

Melville, Matula, Pinney and Pelletier (2010) conducted a study to understand the attributes considered in purchasing a laptop. This study was done in Franklin Pierce. The issue identified is that many students don't do much research in purchasing a laptop. The study was also stated that majority of the foreign students are highly satisfied with apple and dell products i.e., the customer satisfaction is high for both the products. They rated Wi-Fi to be an important feature or attribute of the laptop.

Behzadien, Hasan and Razavi (2011) also conducted the study to understand the required features of a laptop for a manager to develop marketing strategies. The study concluded that the features looking for are processor speed, size, graphics card, and price. Thus the attributes required for a student and managers differ.

Nasir (2006) found that companies should understand the consumer preferences and values residing in them and should develop strategies accordingly to increase customer satisfaction loyalty and retention. These can also strengthening their competitive position. They should also understand the consumer purchase decision of various product markets.

Pullman, Moore and Wardell (2002) in their study said that it's impossible to remain cost competitive and offer every feature desired by customers.

Tripathi and Siddiqui (2010) said that marketers use technique called conjoint analysis to design new product sets. Conjoint analysis is a survey based multivariate technique that measures consumer's preferences about the attributes of a product or a service. Final goal of conjoint analysis is to identify the most desirable combination of features to be offered in the product or service.

Green and Krieger (1997) suggest that use of conjoint analysis technique for the detection of competitive actions and reactions in the case of introducing new products or services, extensions through the analysis of consumer`s preferences and perceptions.

Green and Sreenivasan (1978) said that the conjoint technique was initially used to study the consumer purchase decisions in early 1970`s and **Louviere (1994)** also stated that some aspects of this analysis is still being developed and regarded this technique as "mature research technique".

Rash (2010) proposed that the biggest changes coming in laptop computers are in the choices of processors, the type of storage and means of user input. Also as wireless infrastructure grows, these mobile computers are gaining wireless capabilities to match.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The problem identified is the struggle for students to find the right kind

of laptop to suit their individual needs. Whether it be for their interests, major, or just identify a brand and model that is within their price range. I have identified my client as the student body of various B-schools in and around Bangalore city. There is a vast pool of components that go into laptops, if uneducated on different matters; one might not find the laptop that suits their needs. The study aims at understanding the laptop brand preference in B-schools.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the various features affecting the purchase of laptop.
- To find out the most preferred laptop brand.

HYPOTHESIS

- **Null hypothesis**: All features of laptop equally influence purchase.
- **Alternate hypothesis**: All features of laptop do not equally influence purchase.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a descriptive kind of research where we try to understand in depth the reasons for choosing a particular laptop brand, from students' point of view. Research instrument is questionnaire and the duration of the study is 3 months.

The questionnaire would help us to understand two dimensions of the research:

- To understand the various features affecting the purchase of laptop.
- To find out the most preferred laptop brand.

Primary data sources: This would include the information given by the students through the means of the questionnaires that is designed.

Secondary data sources: This includes all the journals, research articles and books related to the topic.

Sample size: The total sample size is 200 consisting of respondents who have purchased laptops and fall in the age group of 18 to 35. This was determined to further get a better idea to elaborate on laptops as well as represent an even mathematical setting.

Sample element: The study is conducted on MBA students and hence the sampling element would be every single MBA student.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis tool: SPSS and MS –Excel.

Tests that were conducted to prove the objectives are Factor analysis and correlation.

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to reduce the number of variables to a few factors that describe the variables. Correlated variables are grouped together and represented by a factor. The observed variables are modelled as linear combinations of the potential factors. The **correlation** is one of the most common and most useful statistics. A correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables.

Assumptions:

The fundamental assumption is that the respondents will answer the questions honestly. The fundamental research will concentrate only on those students who use a laptop. Only data collected from laptop owners would be useful to this study.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study is restricted to B-schools in Bangalore city.
- The most difficult limitation of this research will be the limited amount of time in which the research needs to collect data and report analysis be complete.
- Respondent error also resulted in biased answering for a few questions.

Important Features of a Laptop Factor Anaysis: Table1:KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.820
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	666.028
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

Interpretation:

- Table1 which is KMO and Bartlett's Test shows that
- KMO Measure of sampling adequacy is greater than 0.5. Therefore, sample is adequatethe
- Bartlett's test of sphericity is used to test the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.
- Significance level = .000 shows that Factor Analysis is significant appropriate tool.

	Component	
Table2:Rotated Component Matrix	1	2
1.Value of purchase of laptop	.687	
2.Battery life and efficiency in purchase of laptop	.846	
3.Processor speed and performance in purchase of laptop	.815	
4.RAM in purchase of laptop	.795	
5. Comfort & Handy in purchase of laptop		.753
6. Portability in purchase of a laptop	.561	.643
7. Color& Model in purchase of a laptop		.877
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Interpretation:

- Table2 which is the Rotated Component Matrix shows that two main components which are the two factors define all the seven variables
- The variables which are features of laptop influence each other and are correlated.
- Thus, the null hypotheses is to be rejected.

All features of laptop do not equally influence purchase.

- Variable like Portability is loaded on two components, but, it has to be included with the second as it carries more weightage.
- Value, Life and Efficiency, Performance and RAM are one component
- Comfort and Handy, Portability, Color &Model move together as the second component, affecting the purchase of laptops by the various customers.
- Factor1: Efficiency and Performance; Factor2: Model Portability are the two factors affecting the purchase of laptops by the various customers.

Table3:Laptop Brand Preference				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Acer	16	8.3	8.3	8.3
Dell	78	40.4	40.4	48.7
Thoshiba	8	4.1	4.1	52.8
HP	19	9.8	9.8	62.7
Sony	21	10.9	10.9	73.6
Compaq	18	9.3	9.3	82.9
Lenovo	19	9.8	9.8	92.7
Apple	4	2.1	2.1	94.8
Samsung	7	3.6	3.6	98.4
Gateway	1	.5	.5	99.0
LG	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	193	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

- The popularity of the brands is clearly visible in the response. With a well structured system for delivery and supply, Dell is the most widely used laptop among the respondents from various parts.
- The other brands are preferred very less and Sony, Lenovo, HP, Compaq etc. have almost similar markets.

SUGGESTIONS

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 laptops. Brand preference for laptop purchase can be increased by focussing on these aspects.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study two main factors have been identified, namely first factor is efficiency and performance; second factor is model portability. These two factors define the seven features of laptop identified in this research. Laptop brands can plan marketing strategies and promotional activities focussed on these seven features and the two factors to attract customers to their brand.

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