



Consumption Pattern of Mobile Phone Users – A Study in Salem District

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ABSTRACT

Revolution in the telecommunication has started at the introduction of mobile phones. The entry of user friendly smart phones has accelerated the use of mobile phones rapidly across the globe. All sections of the people tend to use mobile phones for their specific reasons which could vary from person to person. The increased usage of mobile phones resulted in occupying the prominent place in the budget of every individual and organization. However, the consumers are conscious regarding the controlling of average monthly expenses on mobile phones. It could be made possible by using more number of SIM cards and the use of rate cutters offered by mobile phone service providers. An attempt has been made in this study to examine the consumption of pattern of mobile phone users in Salem District.

KEYWORDS : Consumption pattern, users, expenses

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone charges have occupied a permanent place in the official as well as domestic budget of every individual. Whether planned or unplanned a considerable portion of earnings has been set aside for mobile phone bills/charges every month. Since the mobile phone usage has become essential for personal and official communication the mobile phone usage has been constantly increasing. Unlike the past decades, all classes of people tend to use mobile phones. It could even be regarded as a communication revolution.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Santhi N (2012), in her study, focused on the perception of the customers towards the leading mobile network providers in the country by getting the customers view on their usage and satisfaction of the product which is provided by the company. She has collected data from 115 sample respondents by structured questionnaire method. She found that free offerings, no charges on service and resolving the problems very quickly are the most important motivational factors. Her study reveals that the companies are at present giving less importance for the loyalty.

Indal Kumar (2014), in his study, analyzed the satisfaction of rural customers towards mobile phone service providers in Allahabad. He found that network coverage, billing services, customer care and value added services emerge as major service parameters. He has concluded that these parameters have strong association with the customer satisfaction.

Arun Prasath R and Vijayadurai J (2016), in their study on 'A Study on Consumer Attitude towards mobile Phone Service Providers in Tamil Nadu' examined the consumers' attitude towards various service offered by mobile service provider. They found that prepaid SIM card was bought by majority of the respondents. Value added services in Airtel and Vodafone have satisfied the respondents to a greater extent.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this mobile phone era, the mobiles phones have reached almost every household. However, the mobile phone users keep on monitoring the monthly expenses. They try to cut the monthly expenses. They try to cut the expenses according to their viability and necessity. The mobile phone service providers facilitate the controlling of mobile phone charges by offering rate cutter cards, message cards, internet cards, etc. depending on their usage. Even though the mobile phones have become as essential product used in day to day life, the consumption level varies from person to person. Under these circumstances, the question before every mobile phone service provider is how the consumers behave in using mobile phones with reference to mobile phone bills/charges. The present study is undertaken with a view to analyze the consumption pattern of mobile phone users in Salem District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been framed for the present study:

- To examine the consumption pattern of mobile phone users
- To understand the relationship between SIM card related variables and consumption pattern and
- To study the association between type of rate cutter used and consumption pattern.
- To offer suggestions to mobile phone service providers for increasing the consumption of mobile phones.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of the present study, the term consumption pattern is meant by the average monthly expenses on mobile phones. The following hypotheses have been framed and tested by applying appropriate statistical tools:

Null Hypothesis $H_0(1)$: There is no significant relationship between number of SIM cards used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

Alternative Hypothesis $H_1(1)$: There is a significant relationship between number of SIM cards used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

Null Hypothesis $H_0(2)$: There is no significant relationship between type of SIM cards used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

Alternative Hypothesis $H_1(2)$: There is a significant relationship between type of SIM cards used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

Null Hypothesis $H_0(3)$: There is no significant relationship between type of rate cutter used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

Alternative Hypothesis $H_1(3)$: There is a significant relationship between type of rate cutter used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is mainly based on the primary data obtained from 450 sample respondents selected from the mobile phone users in Salem District under convenience sampling method. The primary data required for the present study have been obtained by administering a structured questionnaire among the selected respondents. The data obtained for the present study have been analyzed by using percentage analysis and chi square test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: CONSUMPTION PATTERN – TWO WAY TABLE

Variables	Classes	Up to Rs.500	Rs.501 to Rs.1000	Rs.1001 to Rs.1500	Total
No. of SIM cards used	One	168 (95.5%)	7 (4.0%)	1 (0.6%)	176
	Two	218 (90.1%)	21 (8.7%)	3 (1.2%)	242
	Three	18 (94.7%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	19
	More than three	9 (69.2%)	4 (30.8%)	0 (0.0%)	13
Type of SIM card	Normal	272 (92.8%)	19 (6.5%)	2 (0.7%)	293
	Micro	103 (92.0%)	9 (8.0%)	0 (0.0%)	112
	Both	38 (84.4%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (4.4%)	45
Type of rate cutters	Monthly RC	161 (93.6%)	10 (5.8%)	1 (0.6%)	172
	Quarterly RC	242 (91.7%)	19 (7.2%)	3 (1.1%)	264
	Annual RC	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	0 (0.0%)	11
	Others	3 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3
	Total	413	33	4	450

From the Table 1, it could be realized that out of 176 respondents using one SIM card only, 95.5 per cent of them have been incurring a monthly expenditure of up to Rs.500 towards mobile phone charges whereas out of 242 respondents using two SIM cards, 90.1 per cent of them have spent up to Rs.500 on mobile phone charges. The monthly expenses on mobile charges of 94.7 per cent of the respondents using three SIM cards was found to be up to Rs.500 while the average monthly expenses on mobile phones of 69.2 per cent of the respondents using more than three SIM cards has been limited up to Rs.500.

It is also understood that out of 293 respondents using normal SIM cards, 92.8 per cent of them have incurred up to Rs.500 as average monthly mobile phone charges whereas 92.0 per cent of the respondents using micro SIM cards have spent up to Rs.500 on average monthly expenses for mobile phone charges.

TABLE 2: CONSUMPTION PATTERN – CHI SQUARE TEST

Variables	Chi Square value	DF	p value	Result
No. of SIM cards used	15.043	6	0.020	Significant @ 5%
Type of SIM card	9.074	4	0.059	Not Significant
Type of rate cutter used	14.933	6	0.021	Significant @ 5%

According to Table 2, the p value stating the relationship between number of SIM cards used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones was found to be 0.02. Since the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant relationship between number of SIM cards used and consumption pattern of mobile phone users. However, the p value stating the association between type of SIM card used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones was found to be 0.059. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is inferred that there is no significant association between type of SIM cards used and consumption pattern of mobile phone users. On the other hand, the p value stating the relationship between types of rate cutter used and average monthly expenses on mobile phones was found to be 0.021. Since the p value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis that 'there is a significant relationship between type of rate cutter used and consumption pattern of mobile phone users' stands good. It is concluded that the type of rater cutter used and consumption pattern of mobile phone users are significantly associated.

FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study:

As the number of SIM cards used increases, the average monthly expenses on mobile phones also increases gradually.

The average monthly expenses on mobile phones of the users of micro SIM cards are found to be greater than that of the users of normal SIM cards.

Majority of the consumers preferred the quarterly rate cutters followed by the mobile phone users preferred monthly rate cutters.

Type of SIM cards has not significantly related to the consumption pattern of mobile phone users whereas number of SIM cards used and type of rate cutter used have significantly influenced the consumption pattern of mobile phone users.

SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the above research findings, the researchers have put for the following suggestions:

The mobile phone service providers should provide minimum customized call charge plans for consumers using more than one SIM card. It would increase the number of customers for the mobile phone service providers.

It is suggested that the mobile phone service providers should offer rate cutters according to the calls made by the mobile phone users.

CONCLUSION

The consumption pattern of mobile phone users has been steadily increasing as indicated by the increase in the number of SIM cards used and increase in the average monthly expenses on mobile phones. In the competitive market, the service providers have to retain the existing customers rather than finding out the new customers. They have to satisfy the existing customers by means of offering customized plans and tariffs.

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