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Awareness of Bharti Airtel customers on prepaid plans

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Abstract

Indian mobile economy is growing at a rapid speed. Airtel is one of the leading company which has over 363 million customers across its operations at the end of September 2016. It continuously innovate new plans and services to facilitate its customers. This induced the researcher to know the customers reason for choosing Airtel, their level of awareness on the plans offered and the factors that influence their level of awareness. One Hundred and Twenty Airtel Prepaid Customers in Coimbatore district were selected to express their view by adopting convenient sampling technique. The study revealed that respondents have selected Airtel Company due to its "Brand Image" followed by High Speed Internet Facility 3G and 4G and Network Quality. Majority of the respondents are with medium level of awareness on the plans offered by Airtel. There exist a significant difference between Family Income and level of awareness on the plans offered. Family Income of the customers has an influence on the level of awareness on the plans.

Keywords: Awareness, customers and plans

Introduction

Indian mobile economy is growing at a rapid speed. Its contribution to India's Gross Domestic Product, is remarkable by GSM (Global System of Mobile Communication) – Report 2016 (GSMA). Our nation is ranked 2nd in terms of wireless connection with 811.59 million subscribers. The Indian telecom sector is expected to generate four million direct and indirect jobs over the next five years (Randstad India 2016). Driven by strong adoption of data consumption on handheld devices, the total mobile services market revenue in India is expected to touch US\$ 37 billion in 2017.

Bharti Airtel an -Overview

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading global telecommunications company operating in 18 countries across Asia and Africa. Headquartered in New Delhi, India, the company ranks amongst the top 3 mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers. It was incorporated in July 07, 1995, as a Public Limited Company. In India, the company offers 2G, 3G and 4G wireless services, mobile commerce, fixed line services, high speed DSL broadband and DTH, enterprise services including national & international long distance services to carriers. In the rest of the geographies, it offers 2G, 3G, 4G wireless services and mobile commerce.

Bharti Airtel was positioned among the top eight companies in the listing of top BSE 100 listed companies in FTI Consulting's 'India Disclosure Index 2016' Report with a composite score of 10 out of 10. It was recognised as the 'Firm of the Year – Telecom' at the 3rd edition of ICICI Lombard & CNBC-TV18 India Risk Management Awards.

Bharti Airtel secured the second position in Interbrand's 'Best Indian Brands Report 2016'. It has been declared winner of 'Golden Peacock Award for Excellence in Corporate Governance' for the year 2016.

Review of literature

1. Mohammed Amerkhan, Abdul Kareem and Ashrul Zeeshan (2014) ^[1] in their research article entitled, "A Study on People Awareness Towards Roaming Tariff Plans", identified there is a lack of awareness about roaming tariff plans among the users.

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2. Madhuri Ajit Chaudhari and Sachin Ashok Ambekar (2013) [2] in their research papers titled, “Customer preference towards various mobile service providers” found that consumers prefer a service provider on the basis of call tariffs, network coverage and value added services more over the consumers are highly influenced by their family members.

Statement of the problem

Telecommunication sector is a upcoming sector in India. Airtel is one of the leading company out of 100 emerging market multinational companies by Transparency International on corporate transparency and reporting. Bharti Airtel has over 363 million customers across its operations at the end of September 2016. So Airtel continuously innovate the new plans and services to facilitates its customers. This induces the researcher to know why the customers are choosing Airtel to share their communication. The customer choice to the plans might be change from time to time. Plans are specially designed and offered depending upon the emerging customer needs. This raises the questions: What is level of awareness on the plans offered by Airtel? What factors influence their level of awareness?

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the reason for selecting Airtel company
2. To assess the level of awareness on the plans offered by Airtel
3. To determine the factors influencing their level of awareness

Methodology

The study basically depends on primary data collected through interview schedule from 120 Airtel Prepaid customers in Coimbatore district by adopting convenient sampling technique. Annual reports of the company and Articles from magazines, journals as well as websites form the secondary source. Data was analyzed using T-test, ANNOVA, Chi-square test and Garrett Ranking method.

Limitations of the study

The study relies on the opinion of Airtel prepaid customers of Coimbatore District. Caution may be taken while generalizing the results.

Findings of the study

Reason for Choosing Airtel

A customer may have various reasons to choose Airtel. The prime reason for choosing Airtel to identify using Garrett Ranking.

Table 1: Reason for Choosing Airtel – Garrett Ranking

| Variables | Total Garrett score | Average Score | Rank |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------|
| Brand Image | 8442 | 70.35 | I |
| Network Quality | 7065 | 58.88 | III |
| High speed I F 3G&4G | 7764 | 64.70 | II |
| Variety of plans | 5755 | 47.96 | V |
| Low tariff rates | 6479 | 53.99 | IV |
| Availability of free SMS | 5319 | 44.33 | VI |
| Customer care Services | 4267 | 35.56 | VIII |
| Enhanced service quality | 3818 | 31.82 | IX |
| Value added services | 4731 | 39.43 | VII |

Table 1 reveals that respondents have selected Airtel Company due to its “Brand Image” followed by High speed Internet Facility 3G&4G, Network Quality, Low tariff rates, Variety of plans, Availability of free SMS, Value added services, Customer care Services and Enhanced service quality. Hence the influence that the customers have given the best preference to Brand Image.

Level of Awareness

Awareness Index is computed to ascertain the level of awareness of the respondents on the prepaid mobile plans

offered by Airtel. Airtel offers various prepaid plans facilitate its customers. Twenty six wireless mobile services are considered for the present study. The response is rated on a five point scale and answer to the question range from five to one. Thus the maximum score is 130. The mean awareness is 79 and the standard deviation is 10. The score up to 69 is categorized as low; the score from 70 to 88 is categorized as medium and the score 89 and above is categorized as high.

Table 2: Level of Awareness on Airtel Prepaid Plans

| Level of Awareness | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Low | 18 | 15 |
| Medium | 81 | 68 |
| High | 21 | 17 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 shows that 18 (15 per cent) respondents have low level of awareness, 81(68 per cent) respondents have medium level of awareness and 21(17 per cent) respondents have high level of awareness on the prepaid plans provided by Airtel.

Factors Influencing Level of Awareness

Independent T-Test

Independent T test is carried out to know whether there exist a significant difference between select variables – Gender, Marital Status and Type of Family- and the level of awareness.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the select personal variables and awareness

Table 3: Select Personal Variables and Level of Awareness

| Variables | | N | Mean | F | Sig |
|----------------|------------|----|--------|--------|------|
| Gender | Male | 88 | 2.0341 | .288 | .774 |
| | Female | 32 | 2.0000 | | |
| Marital Status | Married | 67 | 2.1045 | 1.726 | .087 |
| | Un married | 53 | 1.9245 | | |
| Type of Family | Nuclear | 47 | 1.9574 | -1.039 | .301 |
| | Joint | 73 | 2.0685 | | |

Source: Primary Data

Table No 3 reveals that there does not exist a significant difference between the select variables gender, marital status, type of family and awareness on the plans offered ($p>0.05$).

Analysis of Variance (ANNOVA)

Annova test is carried out to know whether there exist a significant difference between select variables – Area of Residence, Age, Members in the Family, Earning Members in the Family, Educational Qualification, Occupation and Respondent Monthly Income – and the level of awareness.

Ho: There does not exist a significant difference between the select personal variables and level of awareness

Table 4: Select Personal Variables and Level of Awareness (ANNOVA)

| Variables | | N | Mean | F | Sig |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Area of Residence | Rural | 41 | 2.0732 | .218 | .804 |
| | Semi urban | 58 | 2.0000 | | |
| | Urban | 21 | 2.0000 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Age | Below-25 | 33 | 1.9394 | 1.210 | .302 |
| | 26-42 | 65 | 2.0154 | | |
| | Above 42 | 22 | 2.1818 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Members in the family | Up to 3 | 31 | 2.0645 | .234 | .792 |
| | 4 | 60 | 2.0333 | | |
| | 5 and above | 29 | 1.9655 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Earning members in the family | 1 | 35 | 1.9429 | .607 | .547 |
| | 2 | 48 | 2.0833 | | |
| | 3 and above | 37 | 2.0270 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Non-Earning Members in the family | 1 | 26 | 2.1923 | 1.445 | .240 |
| | 2 | 67 | 1.9851 | | |
| | 3 | 27 | 1.9630 | | |
| Total | | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Educational Qualification | No Formal Education | 5 | 2.2000 | 1.364 | .243 |
| | Up to HSC | - | - | | |
| | Diploma | 17 | 1.8824 | | |
| | Under Graduate | 46 | 2.0000 | | |
| | Post Graduate | 27 | 2.0370 | | |
| | Professional | 5 | 2.6000 | | |
| | Others (specify) | 20 | 2.0000 | | |
| Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | | |
| Occupation | Agriculture | 13 | 2.0769 | 1.432 | .209 |
| | Business | 11 | 1.9091 | | |
| | Employee | 45 | 2.0444 | | |
| | Professionalist | 17 | 2.0588 | | |
| | Retired | 5 | 2.6000 | | |
| | Students | 23 | 1.9565 | | |
| | Other specify | 6 | 1.6667 | | |
| Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | | |
| Respondent Monthly Income | Up to 3213 | 29 | 1.8966 | .968 | .383 |
| | 3214-51437 | 73 | 2.0685 | | |
| | Above 51437 | 18 | 2.0556 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |
| Family Income | 22653 | 18 | 2.0556 | 3.104 | .049** |
| | 22654-59396 | 72 | 1.9306 | | |
| | ABOVE 59396 | 30 | 2.2333 | | |
| | Total | 120 | 2.0250 | | |

Source: Primary Data, **Significant

Table 4 reveals that among the personal variable selected there exist a significant difference between the select variable Family Income and level of awareness on the plans offered ($P < 0.05$), whereas there does not exist a significant difference between select variables namely Area of Residence, Gender, Age, Marital Status, Type of Family, Members in the Family, Earning Members in your Family, Non-earning members in the family, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Respondent Monthly Income, and level of awareness on plans offered ($P > 0.05$).

Chi-Square Test

Chi square test is carried out to know whether there exist a significant association between select variables – Area of Residence, Gender, Age, Marital Status, Type of Family, Members in the Family, Earning Members in your Family, Non-earning members in the family, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Respondent Monthly Income, Family Income – and the level of awareness.

H₀: There does not significant association between the select personal variables and level of awareness.

Table 5: Select Personal Variables and Level of Awareness. (Chi Square Test)

| Variables | | Level of Awareness | | | N=120 | X ² | 'P' Value |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|
| | | Low n=18 | Medium n=81 | High n=21 | | | |
| Area of residence | Rural | 5(12.2) | 28(68.3) | 8(19.5) | 41 | 2.993 | .559 |
| | Semi urban | 11(19.0) | 36(62.1) | 11(19.0) | 58 | | |
| | Urban | 2(9.5) | 17(81.0) | 2(9.5) | 21 | | |
| Gender | Male | 6(9.0) | 48(71.6) | 13(19.4) | 67 | 4.395 | .111 |
| | Female | 12(22.6) | 33(62.3) | 8(15.1) | 53 | | |
| Age | Below 25 | 6(18.2) | 23(69.7) | 4(12.1) | 33 | 3.102 | .541 |
| | 26-42 | 11(16.9) | 42(64.6) | 12(18.5) | 65 | | |
| | Above 43 | 1(4.5) | 16(72.7) | 5(22.7) | 22 | | |
| Marital Status | Married | 12(13.6) | 61(69.3) | 15(17.0) | 88 | .610 | .737 |
| | Un Married | 6(18.8) | 20(62.5) | 6(18.8) | 32 | | |
| Type of Family | Nuclear | 8(17.0) | 33(70.2) | 6(12.8) | 47 | 1.284 | .526 |
| | Joint | 16(13.7) | 48(65.8) | 15(20.5) | 73 | | |
| Members in the family | 3 | 5(16.1) | 19(61.3) | 7(22.6) | 31 | 1.868 | .760 |
| | 4 | 9(15.0) | 40(66.7) | 11(18.3) | 60 | | |
| | 5 | 4(13.8) | 22(75.9) | 3(10.3) | 29 | | |
| Earning members in the family | 1 | 6(17.1) | 25(71.4) | 4(11.4) | 35 | 1.551 | .818 |
| | 2 | 6(12.5) | 32(66.7) | 10(20.8) | 48 | | |
| | 5 | 6(16.2) | 24(64.9) | 7(18.9) | 37 | | |
| Non-Earning members in the family | 1 | 3(11.5) | 15(57.7) | 8(30.8) | 26 | .4354 | .360 |
| | 2 | 11(16.4) | 46(68.7) | 10(14.9) | 67 | | |
| | 3 | 4(14.8) | 20(74.1) | 3(11.1) | 27 | | |
| Educational Qualification | No Formal Education | 0(0) | 4(80.0) | 1(20.0) | 5 | 12.333 | .263 |
| | Up to HSC | - | - | - | - | | |
| | Diploma | 2(11.8) | 15(88.2) | 0(0) | 17 | | |
| | Under Graduate | 8(17.4) | 30(65.2) | 8(17.4) | 46 | | |
| | Post Graduate | 4(14.8) | 18(66.7) | 5(18.5) | 27 | | |
| | Professional | 0(0) | 2(40.0) | 3(60.0) | 5 | | |
| Occupation | Others | 4(20.0) | 12(60.0) | 4(20.0) | 20 | 14.174 | .290 |
| | Daily wage earners | - | - | - | - | | |
| | Agriculture | 1(7.7) | 10(76.9) | 2(15.4) | 13 | | |
| | Business | 1(9.1) | 10(90.9) | 0(0) | 11 | | |
| | Employee | 6(13.3) | 31(68.9) | 8(17.8) | 45 | | |
| | Professionalist | 3(17.6) | 10(58.8) | 4(23.5) | 17 | | |
| | Retired | 0(0) | 2(40.0) | 3(60.0) | 5 | | |
| | Students | 5(21.7) | 14(60.9) | 4(17.4) | 23 | | |
| Others (specify) | 2(33.3) | 4(66.7) | 0(0) | 6 | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----|-------|--------|
| Monthly Income | 3213 | 7(24.1) | 18(62.1) | 4(13.8) | 29 | .2962 | .611 |
| | 3214-51436 | 9(12.3) | 50(68.5) | 14(19.2) | 73 | | |
| | Above 51436 | 2(11.1) | 13(72.2) | 3(16.7) | 18 | | |
| Family Income | 22653 | 1(5.6) | 15(83.3) | 2(11.1) | 18 | 9.458 | .050** |
| | 22654-59396 | 14(19.4) | 49(68.1) | 9(12.5) | 72 | | |
| | Above 59396 | 3(10.0) | 17(56.7) | 10(33.3) | 30 | | |

Source: Primary Data, ** Significant

Table 5 reveals that among the personal variable selected there exist a significant association between the select personal variable Family Income and the level of awareness on the plans offered ($P < 0.05$), whereas there does not exist a significant association between select personal variables namely Area of Residence, Gender, Age, Marital Status, Type of Family, Members in the Family, Earning Members in your Family, Non-earning members in the family, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Respondent Monthly Income, and level of awareness on the plans offered ($P > 0.05$).

Suggestions for enhancing customer awareness

1. Pamphlets / Brochures pertaining the features of plans offered may be issued to public.
2. Enhanced Advertisement in various media may be initiated.
3. Flex boards portraying the features of plans offered can be placed in prominent places.

Conclusion

Even in the competitive era, Airtel establishes a marketable footage. The present study reveals that majority of the respondents are with medium level of awareness on the plans offered by Airtel. There exist a positive association between the select variable – Family Income and the level of awareness on the plans. Further studies may be initiated by expanding the geographical area as well as considering value added services.

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