

**A STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF BRANDING ON
CUSTOMER PREFERENCE OF BSNL, TIRUCHIRAPALLI
DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Organizations develop brands as a way to attract and keep customers by promoting value, image, prestige, and lifestyle. By using a particular brand, consumer develops positive image about the brand. In this competitive arena communication plays a vital role so the Telecom Industries are the major source for communication. BSNL, being a public sector obviously have to compete with various players like Airtel, Aircel, Reliance, Tata Indicom etc., with their stringent rules and regulations guided by TRAI. Hence in order to understand about the customer requirements their likes and dislikes preference is sine-quo-non for BSNL. In this study would be helpful to the BSNL in knowing about the Customer Satisfaction, Customer Perception, Customer Preferences and service requirements and about the other competitors status in the market thereby helping them in improve their quality of services offered.

Key Words: Customer Satisfaction, Customer Perception, Customer Preferences

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I. INTRODUCTION

Brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of all these which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them those of the competitors. Thus a brand identifies the creator or seller of the product. A brand is the symbolic embodiment of all the information connected with a product or service. It encompasses the set of expectations associated with the product or service, which typically arise in the minds of “people” (consumers, buyers, or other target audiences). The selection of a proper brand name is the major step in branding a product. The branding of a product is like naming a newborn child. It basically it serves to identify the offering. Branding can add value to a product and is therefore an intrinsic aspect of product strategy.

1.1 BRANDING:

Branding is the art of creating and maintaining a brand. Marketers seek to develop or align the expectations comprising the target audience's brand experience through branding activities. Branding carries the "promise" to the marketplace that a product or service has a certain quality or characteristic which makes it special or unique (i.e. differentiated). Whatever the mix of programs, branding techniques should be consistent and complementary when it is well executed. It includes Brand Name, Logo, Trademark, Graphic Slogan or Imagery, Company Livery, Packaging or Uniform, and Advertising. Organizations are taking advantage of psychology of human beings by developing attractive brands. To understand branding, it is important to know what brands are. A brand is the idea or image of a specific product or services that consumers connect with, by identifying the name, logo, slogan, or design of the company who owns the idea or image. Branding is when that idea or image is marketed so that it is recognizable by more and more people, and identified with a certain service or product when

there are many other companies offering the same service or product. Advertising professionals work on branding not only to build brand recognition, but also to build good reputations and a set of standards to which the company should strive to maintain or surpass. Branding is an important part of Internet commerce, as branding allows companies to build their reputations as well as expand beyond the original product and service, and add to the revenue generated by the original brand. Branding is also a way to build an important company asset, which is a good reputation. Whether a company has no reputation, or a less than stellar reputation, branding can help in changing that. Branding can build an expectation about the company services or products, and can encourage the company to maintain that expectation, or exceed them by bringing better products and services to the market place.

1.2 REASONS FOR BRANDING:

- The brand name makes it easier to identify the product, both for the marketer and consumer.
- It makes it easier to process orders and track down problems.
- The brand name and trademark provide legal protection for unique product features which would otherwise be copied by competitors.
- Branding gives the marketer an opportunity to attract a loyal and profitable set of customers by creating brand image and brand loyalty.
- A good brand helps to build a corporate image.
- Branding helps the marketer to segment markets.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE TO BUILD A BRANDING:

Branding consists of the name, symbol, term, sign, design or any combination of these that identify the goods and services of the company and differentiate it from another. Branding is the visual voice of your company. It should really be consistent in all forms of media to have a solid, recognizable voice. Any visual representation of the company should in some way convey

the branding of the company. Not to say everything should be a carbon copy of the other elements. A photograph should be able to convey an image in the same “voice” as an art element. To build a brand it must determine what it is trying to convey and to whom it is intended. It may be a lifestyle, emotion or status. The key is to check everything against the message of the brand. This allows a lot of freedom in design styles as long as it supports the message of the brand. The goal is to differentiate and to create a unique brand.

A strong brand:

- **It creates consumer preference for the product/service behind the brand.**
- **It provides increased revenues and market share.**
- **It increases the company’s market value.**
- **It helps the company survive temporary crises.**
- **It prevents new competitors from entering the market.**
- **It increases profitability by allowing the company to charge a higher price for their products or services.**
- **It creates a unique and differentiated company image.**
- **It increases existing distributor’s loyalty.**
- **It helps the company attract new distribution for its products.**
- **It offers the company more negotiation power with its suppliers.**
- **It decreases employee turnover.**

1.4 CUSTOMER PREFERENCE:

Customer purchase preference is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. It is seen as a key performance indicator within business. In a competitive market place where business competes for customers, customer

satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator and increasingly has become a key element of business strategy. Organizations are increasingly interested in retaining existing customers while targeting non-customers; measuring customer satisfaction provides an indication of how successful the organization is at providing products and/or services to the marketplace. Infact, customer satisfaction is an ambiguous and abstract concept, and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and from product/service to product/service. The state of satisfaction depends both on the number of psychological and physical variables which correlate with satisfaction behaviors such as return and recommend rate. The level of satisfaction can also vary depending on other options the customer may have and other products against which the customer can compare the organization's products.

1.5 BSNL:

The foundation of Telecom Network in India was laid by the British during the 19th century. The history of BSNL is linked with the beginning of Telecom in India. In 19th century and for almost entire 20th century, the Telecom in India was operated as a Government of India wing. Earlier it was part of erstwhile Post & Telegraph Department (P&T). In 1975 the Department of Telecom (DoT) was separated from P&T. DoT was responsible for running of Telecom services in entire country until 1985 when Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) was carved out of DoT to run the telecom services of Delhi and Mumbai. It is a well-known fact that BSNL was carved out of Department of Telecom to provide level playing field to private telecoms. Subsequently in 1990s the telecom sector was opened up by the government for private investment; therefore it became necessary to separate the government policy wing from operations wing. The Government of India corporatized the operations wing of DOT on October 01, 2000 and named it as Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). Thus BSNL operated as a public sector from that day onwards. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (known as BSNL, *India Communications Corporation Limited*) is a public sector communications company in India.

1.6 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

This research is carried out to know the influence of BSNL branding along with different influencing factors involved in the purchase of various services offered by BSNL. This research will examine that in mobile phone telecommunication either brand is sufficient for a long term customer base, and that brand association or there are any other factor for long time survival of the company.

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To evaluate the link between demographic variables and its impact on branding on customer preferences.

1.8 HYPOTHESES:

In order to achieve the above objective, the following hypotheses were made to investigate the study.

- H1: Customer Purchase preference of BSNL services differ according to their personal profile

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study intended to carryout in Tiruchirappali District.. This study specially concentrates BSNL and its customer preference in Tiruchirappali District.

1.10 METHODOLOGY:

In order to investigate the objectives of this study, it has indented to employ the descriptive research method. Primery data is applied in this study. The questionnaire survey has

proposed to collect data. Convenient sampling method is used to select the respondents. Here the sample size is 600 samples and it is limited to the area Trichy Corporation consisting of 5 branch office and one head office. 100 respondents are investigated in each of 6 BSNL office premises.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kapferer (1997) mentioned that “the brand is a sign-therefore external- whose function is to disclose the hidden qualities of the product which are inaccessible to contact” (p.28). The brand served to identify a product and to distinguish it from the competition

Hoeffler & Ariely (1999) stated that “Consumer experiences are the foundation of their preferences. Brand experience may have a direct impact on brand preferences and an indirect impact mediated by brand knowledge”.

Kotler (2000) mentions branding as “a major issue in product strategy”. As the brand was only part of the product, the communication strategy worked towards exposing the brand and creating brand image.

Keller (2003) says, “technically speaking, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand”. He recognizes, however, that brands today are much more than that. As can be seen, according to these definitions brands had a simple and clear function as identifiers.

In the words of (Lindstrom, 2008), there are three pronged approaches to developing an effective branding strategy namely, determine which audience to focus on, determine what message your brand should convey and finally, determine what creates the brand. He further opined that a

brand must have a clear audience focus, value focus and tone-of-voice focus with which to deliver its well-honed message.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA & DISCUSSION

The **independent sample T-test** has been used for an purpose of to find any mean difference existed between some of basics demographic and personal information of respondents. For example, difference between gender group, married or unmarried employees, and some other personal and demographic variables regarding their opinion on impact of branding and their preference of availing product and services of BSNL.

TABLE -1

Independent Sample T Test on Various Dependent Variable vs Gender – Result of Group Statistics

Dependent Variables	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand	Male	314	2.62	1.301	.073
	Female	286	2.41	1.151	.068
Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand	Male	314	2.81	.758	.043
	Female	286	2.61	.488	.029
Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand	Male	314	2.75	1.398	.079
	Female	286	2.60	.975	.058

Source: primary data

Result of Independent Sample Test

Dependent Variables		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand	a*	5.137	.024	2.070	598	.039	.208
	b*			2.082	597.487	.038	.208
Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand	a*	3.377	.067	3.805	598	.000	.200
	b*			3.879	539.937	.000	.200
Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand	a*	58.596	.000	1.580	598	.115	.157
	b*			1.605	560.734	.109	.157

(a* = Equal variances assumed, b* = Equal variances not assumed)

1. Gender opinion regarding Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of male and female respondent regarding Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand. To check whether or not male and female respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale opinion. On the five point scale, males gave a mean rating of approximately 2.62, whereas females gave a mean rating of approximately 2.41.

Hypotheses

$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$

$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of Male

μ_B : Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of Female

H₀: There is no differences between Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand Male and Female.

H_a: There is a differences between Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of Male and Female.

The result of test statistics shows the F value 5.137, the p value of .024 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups cannot be rejected at the customary significance level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .208 (2.62 – 2.41) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score of Male and female are the differ between the gender.

2. Gender opinion regarding Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of male and female respondent regarding Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand. To check whether or not male and female respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale opinion. On the five point scale, males gave a mean rating of approximately 2.81, whereas females gave a mean rating of approximately 2.61.

Hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand of Male

μ_B : Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand of Female

H₀: There is no differences between Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand Male and Female.

H_a: There is a differences between Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand of Male and Female.

The result of test statistics shows the F value 3.377, the p value of .067 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups cannot be rejected at the customary significance

level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .200 (2.81 – 2.61) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score regarding the opinion on Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand of Male and female are the differ between the gender.

3. Gender opinion regarding Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of male and female respondent regarding Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand. To check whether or not male and female respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale opinion. On the five point scale, males gave a mean rating of approximately 2.75, whereas females gave a mean rating of approximately 2.60.

Hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of Male

μ_B : Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of Female

H_0 : There is no differences between Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand Male and Female.

H_a : There is a differences between Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of Male and Female.

The result of test statistics shows the F value 58.596, the p value of .000 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups can be rejected at the customary significance level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .157 (2.81 – 2.61) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score regarding the

opinion on Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of Male and female are the differ between the gender.

TABLE - 2

Independent Sample T Test on Various Dependent Variables Vs Marital Status of the Respondent - Result of Group Statistics

Testing Variables	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand	Married	380	2.63	1.282	.066
	Unmarried	220	2.33	1.128	.076
Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand	Married	380	2.74	.693	.036
	Unmarried	220	2.67	.568	.038
Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand	Married	380	2.72	1.210	.062
	Unmarried	220	2.61	1.228	.083

Source: Primary Data

Result of Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand	A *	3.240	.072	2.882	598	.004	.300
	B *			2.982	505.401	.003	.300
Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand	A *	.098	.755	1.389	598	.165	.077
	B *			1.464	531.080	.144	.077

Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand	A*	.666	.415	1.017	598	.310	.105
	B*			1.013	451.934	.312	.105

(A* = Equal variances assumed, B* = Equal variances not assumed)

1. Gender opinion regarding Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of Married and Unmarried respondent regarding the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand. To check whether or not Married and Unmarried respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale opinion. On the five point scale, Married people gave a mean rating of approximately 2.63, whereas Unmarried people gave a mean rating of approximately 2.33.

Hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of married respondents

μ_B : Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of unmarried respondents

H₀: There is no differences between Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand between Married and unmarried respondent.

H_a: There is a differences between Mean score of the Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand between Married and unmarried respondent.

The result of test statistics shows the F value 3.240, the p value of .072 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups cannot be rejected at the customary significance level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .300 (2.63 – 2.33) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score regarding the opinion on Emotional attachment with BSNL Brand of married and unmarried respondents are the differ between them.

2. Gender opinion regarding Promotional are necessary for BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of Married and Unmarried respondent regarding the Promotions are necessary for BSBL Brand. To check whether Married or Unmarried respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale opinion. On the five point scale, males gave a mean rating of approximately 2.74, whereas females gave a mean rating of approximately 2.67.

Hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand of married respondents

μ_B : Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand of unmarried respondents

H_0 : There is no differences between Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand between Married and unmarried respondent.

H_a : There is a differences between Mean score of the Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand between Married and unmarried respondent.

The result of test statistics shows the F value .098, the p value of .755 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups cannot be rejected at the customary significance level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .077 (2.74 – 2.67) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score regarding the opinion on Promotional are necessary for BSBL Brand of married and unmarried respondents are the differ between them.

3. Gender opinion regarding Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand:

The above table shows the opinion of Married and Unmarried respondent regarding Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand. To check whether or not Married and Unmarried respondent differed significantly in terms of their mean ratings on this five point scale

opinion. On the five point scale, married respondent gave a mean rating of approximately 2.72, whereas unmarried people gave a mean rating of approximately 2.61.

Hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu_A - \mu_B = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_A - \mu_B \neq 0$$

(Significance Level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

μ_A : Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of married respondents

μ_B : Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of unmarried respondents

H₀: There is no differences between Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand Married and unmarried.

H_a: There is a differences between Mean score of the Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of Married and unmarried.

The result of test statistics shows the F value .666, the p value of .415 indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances for the two groups cannot be rejected at the customary significance level of .05. The p value implies that the odds are 2 to 3 that a difference of magnitude of .105 (2.71 – 2.61) could be occurred from chance. At the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the mean satisfaction score regarding the opinion on Rating the Experience of services and quality with BSNL Brand of married and unmarried respondents are the differ between them.

IV. CONCLUSION

The branding of the service provider continues to be an important aspect in driving retention and most service providers have been successful in building a positive and favourable image among the subscribers. From this study customers are emotionally attached with BSNL brand and purchased their connection because of brand. This study presented a result that BSNL is good at services. Error free and accurate bills, being promptly delivered are something that the customers seem to be taking for granted and have little impact on retention. This will help the BSNL to keep its market share for a long time in the competitive environment.

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