

**A STUDY ON BRAND SWITCHING AMONG
CELLULAR NETWORK SERVICE USERS IN
TIRUCHIRAPPALLI**

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Abstract

The mobile phone has indeed become an integral part of human existence used for talking, short messaging listening to radio, pictures and video, playing games, watching video clips, chatting and networking with friends, etc., The mobile phone is more than just a tool for communication; it has become a personal device, a utile-entertainment form. Users of the mobile phone are very conscious of deciding the brand of service providers, keeping in mind their various merits and demerits. In researches relating to brand switching, it is found that consumer satisfaction is the main factors influencing brand switching.

Keywords; Brand Switching, Network, Communication, Mobile Phone.

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Introduction

Fast pace changes in today's world has given rise to many emerging trends in different fields. People are more concerned and aware about the facts and figures of what they buy, what they use and what they prefer to be associated with. They want to know about the insight and background of the different products that they come in their daily lives. It's not easy rather possible now to keep the consumer in confusion or in the blurry image regarding what they purchases. Initially, brand loyalty was something that most of the firm used to enjoy but today the changing patterns have certainly take over the markets with a term called "Marketing."

. Brand switching may take place due to a number of reasons. The consumer might be bored of the accustomed brand or they would want to try something new for a change. They would also do it if there is something better in the new brand they are shifting to. It is important to understand that most of the advertising is done for brand switching, and this is why the ads are mostly telling that they are better than the rest and so on.

Many studies find that consumers switch brand either due to the extrinsic motives price, coupons or intrinsic motives desire to try out a new brand. Extrinsic motive to switch are more prevalent amongst the experienced consumers as compared to the consumers with limited purchase experience even with the level of satisfaction, the consumers may change their repurchase decision in the presence of the high switching barriers like interpersonal relationship switching cost, and competitor's attractiveness. There is also research that shows that young consumers may change their loyalties towards a particular brand depending on the situation and the role they play. When they are independent, they also like to experiment with new brands where as more serious and responsible roles may make them switch over to the brand used by their parents. However, brand relationships and their impact on brand switching intentions have not been examined in this stream of literature. Teenagers tend to get influenced by the reference groups for a large number of product classes as compared to others, say housewives Their role models hold a strong position in influencing the teenagers' behaviour, but several studies have also shown that the parents still play the dominant role in influencing the teenagers' lifestyles and consumption patterns.

It is observed that youngsters adopt rational consumption skills from their parents; this influence varies across the situations' product categories' and the stages in consumer decision-making process a study done on the university students revealed that family influence starts decreasing with the amount of time the youngster is out of home' and that influential position is transferred to the peers [feltham'1998] one of the findings suggests that peer influence operates most strongly in situations with weak family communication; socially-oriented family communication patterns' and unstable family environment peers influence the socialization process and con-tribute to the social pressure to conform to the group expectation relating to

brand involvement Drawing from this re-search' We incorporate the influence of peers and family in the context of brand relationship formation and brand switching intentions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Brand switching is the process of switching from the routine use of one product or brand to steady usage of a different but similar product. In our day-to-day life, it could be observed that some consumers still switch a brand even if they have high satisfaction with the product, while consumers with low satisfaction would not necessarily switch brands. Hence brand switching a complex and complicating challenges for the sustainable development of the service providers.

Switching costs and product involvement are also important factors influencing brand switching. The influence of vital statistical variables, consumer's satisfaction, switching costs and product involvement force consumers towards brand switching. The success or failure of the cellular phone service providers purely depends on the consumer's satisfaction and with the service they have been rendering and brand switching. Even though the cellular phone service providers provide a satisfactory service to the consumer it is possible that may be brand switching.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study covers the clients of cellular phone service in Tiruchirappalli who switched over brands. The study analyses and evaluates the impact of the personal issues of clients while leaving one network to another in Tiruchirappalli city. The study was conducted during February 2013.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To find out the reasons for brand switching

To study the relationship between personal profile and current Cellular Network Service used.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

The study has been carried out with the following null hypothesis.

There is no association between the age, sex, educational qualification, occupational status, domicile, period of usage; amount spent every month and monthly income of the respondents and usage of current cellular network service provider.

METHODOLOGY

Convenient sampling method is used collecting data from 50 respondents. The researcher used a structured interview schedule as the tool for collection of primary data. The questions were framed in such a way that they tool help the analysis of the data collected. The secondary data were collected from books, magazines, journals, previous studies and World-Wide Websites.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

Albert et al (2010) in their study found that to retain customers, organizations have to understand their behaviour and try to satisfy them by catering their needs and preferences.

Bigne, J Enrique et al (2008) in the given study revealed that consumers considered advertisement as a reliable source of knowledge about any product or services. Advertisement can affect any income group individuals. Consumers were influenced by the appeal and personality used in the specific brand advertisements.

Chaplin, Lan et al (2005) measured the impact of one's attitude towards switching behavior, perceived behavior control (termed as perceived switching costs) and satisfaction with the product or service provider, with intentions to switch. Results confirmed the significant influence of all three variables on switching intentions.

Lachance, Marie J et al (2003).It has been seen from the existing literature that understanding behaviour of consumers i.e. their needs and preferences has been studying over a time. Also, switching behaviour of theses consumers plays vital role in the long term sustainability of the organisations. Thus, the present study tries to understand the behaviour of shampoo users and the various reasons for their switching to other brands.

Rana, Shimona Shahi (2007)., in his study investigates determinants that cause mobile phone Customers to transit from being loyal to service quality. It concluded that there are different factors which affect the Customers to service quality from loyalty to switching intentions such as price, technical service quality, Functional service quality, switching costs, etc. But, the rating was given that price is the most important factor which affects the Customers to switch loyalties to another provider.

Thomson, Mathhewet al (2005) in their study examined the relationship between service quality, corporate image, trust and Customer loyalty. The research finds that although all the independent variables, service quality, corporate image, and trust have certain degree of relationship with the dependent variable, Customer loyalty, only trust has the strongest relationship with Customer loyalty.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION Table-1

Chi-square Test showing the Association between age of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Age				Statistical inference
	Below 20 yrs (n=3)	21 to 30 yrs (n=30)	31 to 40 yrs (n=14)	41 to 50 yrs (n=3)	
Airtel	1(33.3%)	5(16.7%)	1(7.1%)	0	$\chi^2=29.721$ $df=27$ $.327>0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	0	7(23.3%)	2(14.3%)	1(33.3%)	
Aircel	1(33.3%)	10(33.3%)	5(35.7%)	0	
BSNL	0	1(3.3%)	2(14.3%)	1(33.3%)	
Idea	1(33.3%)	4(13.3%)	2(14.3%)	0	
Reliance	0	0	1(7.1%)	0	
Tata Docomo	0	1(3.3%)	1(7.1%)	0	
Uninor	0	1(3.3%)	0	0	
MTS	0	0	0	1(33.3%)	
Videocon	0	1(3.3%)	0	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 1 show that 33.3 per cent of the respondents using Aircel network service are in the age group of between 21 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years. Table also shows that there is no significant association between age of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 2

Chi-square test showing the association between gender of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Gender		Statistical inference
	Male (n=32)	Female (n=18)	
Airtel	6(18.8%)	1(5.6%)	$\chi^2=12.899$ $df=9$ $.171>0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	7(21.9%)	3(16.7%)	
Aircel	6(18.8%)	10(55.6%)	
BSNL	2(6.3%)	2(11.1%)	
Idea	6(18.8%)	1(5.6%)	
Reliance	1(3.1%)	0	
Tata Docomo	2(6.3%)	0	
Uninor	0	1(5.6%)	
MTS	1(3.1%)	0	
Videocon	1(3.1%)	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 2 shows that 21.9 percent of the respondents using Vodafone network service are male and 55.6 percent of the respondents using Aircel are female. Table also shows that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3

Chi-square Test showing the association between domicile of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Domicile		Statistical inference
	Urban (n=28)	Rural (n=22)	

Airtel	2(7.1%)	5(22.7%)	$\chi^2=15.641$ $df=9$ $.075>0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	7(25%)	3(13.6%)	
Aircel	7(25%)	9(40.9%)	
BSNL	2(7.1%)	2(9.1%)	
Idea	7(25%)	0	
Reliance	0	1(4.5%)	
Tata Docomo	0	2(9.1%)	
Uninor	1(3.6%)	0	
MTS	1(3.6%)	0	
Videocon	1(3.6%)	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 3 shows that 40.9 per cent of the respondents using Aircel are hailing in rural area and 25 per cent of the respondents each using 'Vodafone', 'Aircel' and 'Idea' are hailing from urban area. The table also shows that there is no significant association between domicile of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4

Association between educational qualification of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Educational qualification					Statistical inference
	Up to HSC (n=3)	Graduate (n=9)	Post graduate (n=28)	Professional (n=6)	Technical (n=4)	
Airtel	0	1(11.1%)	4(14.3%)	2(33.3%)	0	$\chi^2=27.585$ $Df=36$ $.842>0.05$ Not
Vodafone	0	0	7(25%)	2(33.3%)	1(25%)	
Aircel	2(66.7%)	6(66.7%)	5(17.9%)	1(16.7%)	2(50%)	

BSNL	0	0	3(10.7%)	1(16.7%)	0	Significant
Idea	0	2(22.2%)	4(14.3%)	0	1(25%)	
Reliance	0	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	
Tata Docomo	1(33.3%)	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	
Uninor	0	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	
MTS	0	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	
Videocon	0	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 4 shows that 66.7 per cent of the respondents each using Aircel are educated upto HSC and Graduate level. The table also shows that there is no significant association between educational qualification of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table - 5

Association between occupation status of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Occupational status		Statistical inference
	Working (n=41)	Non-working (n=9)	
Airtel	5(12.2%)	2(22.2%)	$\chi^2=8.091$ df=9 .525 > 0.05 Not Significant
Vodafone	9(22%)	1(11.1%)	
Aircel	12(29.3%)	4(44.4%)	
BSNL	4(9.8%)	0	
Idea	6(14.6%)	1(11.1%)	

Reliance	1(2.4%)	0
Tata Docomo	2(4.9%)	0
Uninor	0	1(11.1%)
MTS	1(2.4%)	0
Videocon	1(2.4%)	0

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table -5 shows that respondents using Aircel network service are 29.3 per cent working and 44.4 per cent are not working. The table also shows that there is no significant association between occupational status of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table -6

Association between income of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Income					Statistical inference
	Up to Rs.5000 (n=10)	Rs.5001 to 10000 (n=28)	Rs.10001 to 15000 (n=6)	Rs.15001 to 20000 (n=4)	Rs.20001 to 25000 (n=2)	
Airtel	2(20%)	4(14.3%)	1(16.7%)	0	0	$\chi^2=37.284$ $df=36$ $.410 > 0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	2(20%)	5(17.9%)	1(16.7%)	2(50%)	0	
Aircel	5(50%)	9(32.1%)	1(16.7%)	0	1(50%)	
BSNL	0	3(10.7%)	1(16.7%)	0	0	
Idea	0	4(14.3%)	0	2(50%)	1(50%)	
Reliance	0	1(3.6%)	0	0	0	
Tata Docomo	0	2(7.1%)	0	0	0	

Uninor	1(10%)	0	0	0	0
MTS	0	0	1(16.7%)	0	0
Videocon	0	0	1(16.7%)	0	0

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table -6 shows that respondents using Aircel Network Service are 50 per cent and are in the monthly income group earning upto Rs.5000, 32.1 per cent of the respondents are in the income group of between 5,001 – 10,000 and only 1 per cent of the respondents are in the income group of between 20001 to 25000. The table also shows that there is no significant association between income of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table -7

Association between period of usage of current brand of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	Period of usage of current brand					Statistical inference
	Less than 1 year (n=1)	1 to 2 years (n=24)	2 to 3 years (n=15)	3 to 4 years (n=7)	Above 4 years (n=3)	
Airtel	0	4(16.7%)	1(6.7%)	1(14.3%)	1(33.3%)	$\chi^2=22.607$ df=36 $.960 > 0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	0	4(16.7%)	2(13.3%)	2(28.6%)	2(66.7%)	
Aircel	1(100%)	7(29.2%)	6(40%)	2(28.6%)	0	
BSNL	0	2(8.3%)	2(13.3%)	0	0	
Idea	0	4(16.7%)	1(6.7%)	2(28.6%)	0	
Reliance	0	0	1(6.7%)	0	0	
Tata Docomo	0	2(8.3%)	0	0	0	
Uninor	0	0	1(6.7%)	0	0	

MTS	0	0	1(6.7%)	0	0	
Videocon	0	1(4.2%)	0	0	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table-7 shows that there is no significant association between period of usage of current brand of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table -8

Association between influenced in switching the brand of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	influenced in switching the brand				Statistical inference
	Self (n=19)	Spouse (n=16)	Friends (n=13)	Relatives (n=2)	
Airtel	3(15.8%)	3(18.8%)	1(7.7%)	0	$\chi^2=26.265$ df=27 .504 > 0.05 Not Significant
Vodafone	2(10.5%)	4(25%)	4(30.8%)	0	
Aircel	6(31.6%)	5(31.3%)	4(30.8%)	1(50%)	
BSNL	2(10.5%)	2(12.5%)	0	0	
Idea	3(15.8%)	2(12.5%)	2(15.4%)	0	
Reliance	1(5.3%)	0	0	0	
Tata Docomo	1(5.3%)	0	0	1(50%)	
Uninor	1(5.3%)	0	0	0	
MTS	0	0	1(7.7%)	0	
Videocon	0	0	1(7.7%)	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table-8 shows that there is no significant association between influenced in switching the brand of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table -9

Association between media influenced in switching of the respondents and their opinion about current usage cellular network service

Current Cellular Network Service Used	media influenced in switching				Statistical inference
	TV (n=14)	Radio (n=3)	Internet (n=20)	Newspaper (n=13)	
Airtel	4(28.6%)	0	3(15%)	0	$\chi^2=34.027$ df=27 $.165>0.05$ Not Significant
Vodafone	2(14.3%)	0	4(20%)	4(30.8%)	
Aircel	6(42.9%)	2(66.7%)	5(25%)	3(23.1%)	
BSNL	0	0	0	4(30.8%)	
Idea	1(7.1%)	1(33.3%)	5(25%)	0	
Reliance	0	0	1(5%)	0	
Tata Docomo	0	0	1(5%)	1(7.7%)	
Uninor	0	0	0	1(7.7%)	
MTS	1(7.1%)	0	0	0	
Videocon	0	0	1(5%)	0	

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table-9 shows that there is no significant association between media influenced in switching of the respondents and their opinion about current cellular network service using. The calculated value is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table-9

Reason for switching

Reason	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
Poor network	22	44.0
No prompt customer care service	8	16.0
Unsuitable plans	1	2.0
Hidden charges	8	16.0
Fancy number	4	8.0
Latest technology	4	8.0
Better feature offered by competitor	1	2.0
Costly charges	2	4.0

Source- primary data

Table-10 shows that 44 percentages of the respondents have shifted the brand for the reason “poor coverage”. Followed by 16 percentage both for the reason No prompt customer care service and hidden charges.

FINDINGS

Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of between 21 to 30 years, who are male and coming from urban area & are educated up to post-graduate level. 82 per cent of the respondents are working and are earning a monthly income of between Rs. 5001 to 10,000 are using Airtel and Aircel for a period of between 1 to 2 years. The respondents spend between Rs. 101-200 for their monthly recharge and switch their brand of cellular network service provider for the reason ‘poor network’, are influenced by self and Internet in brand switching.

There is no significant association between age of the respondents, gender, domicile, educational qualification, occupational status, income, period of usage of current brand, influencer in switching the brand and their opinion about current cellular network service using.

SUGGESTIONS

Though external factors are very complex and cannot be precisely identified influencing the decision making of the consumers, their anticipated income, technological changes, business agent of the service providers, professional or business needs, especially advertisement outlay and competition among producers to push up their product and psyche of the clients may be concluded influencing the decision making process. Hence the service providers should concentrate more on the external issues.

The cellular phone service providers are good in their network connection and in providing new schemes to their customers to keep them always in connection. They are providing a good service to the customers. This would help them to have a good rapport between the clients. However the company could make the brand according to the expectation of the customers. Always consumer's satisfaction would make the brand successful.

CONCLUSION

The Indian cellular phone networks have been coming up with new features every day. An innovation is happening in the mobile network technology every day. According to this study, the customers are more interested to have their brand with reasonable cost and with good network. The customers need to know frequently about the various facilities that the company is providing and about the new schemes that they offer through Advertisement, SMS, Calls, etc. The Brand Switching is not mostly influenced by personal dimensions such as age, sex, educational qualification, occupational status, domicile, period of usage and amount spent every month for connection. The conclusion drawn from the study is that the external factors around the respondents are hugely responsible for their Brand Switching. The cellular phone service providers can provide the customers good quality network to make the customer use the same network all through their life. The cellular phone service providers could facilitate the immediate service to the request suggested by the customers. Also the company could introduce new schemes to attract them. If all these would happen, then the cellular Phone network may prevent or minimize brand switching.

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