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A study of the Tele-connectivity Users' perception level towards the various Tele-connectivity service brands

(A Study Conducted at Patna, with special reference to Aditya Birla Telecommunications Ltd.)

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Abstract : *Perception of users / consumers / customers is an ever changing phenomena as far as marketing related issues are concerned. The perception of users of tele-connectivity services is influenced by a host of parameters, and this study is an exercise in the direction of probing into the perception levels of tele-service users vis-à-vis the variety of brands prevailing in the market today.*

Keywords : *Perception, Subscriber base, Brand recognition, Relative advantage, Tele-connectivity service marketing.*

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Introduction to the Study :

The central question for marketers is: How do consumers respond to various marketing efforts the company might use? The company that really understands consumer's response to different product features, prices and advertising appeals has a great advantage over its competitors.

Consumer behavior is affected by a host of factors, user's Perception being an important psychological factor, as it differs in every individual. How these diverse users make their choices among various brands/ products embraces a fascinating array of factors.Our research relates to the study of the user's perception level towards various Tele-Connectivity service brands *(Al-Khater, K and Nasser, K., 2003)*.

Hypothesis of the Study :

The focal point of this study is concerned with identifying, assessing and evaluating the Tele-Connectivity User's Perception level towards the various Tele-Connectivity brands, as it is assumed that every Tele-Connectivity service user today functions on the belief that it is the perception index which dominates and affects the decision making ability concerning Tele-Connectivity service brands *(Gardner, M.P. (1985).*

Objectives of the Study :

The objective of the research consists of the purpose or the rationale for the achievement of which the research is conceived and designed. The major objectives of our research are:-

a) To assess the users perception profile towards Tele-connectivity service brands, on various parameters.

b) To identify and explore customer's brand preference with a view to justify the loyalty status of Tele- connectivity service user groups.

c) To determine the factors governing the Tele-connectivity user's decision-making regarding their purchase.

Methodology of the Study :

The entire research has been based upon a two tier level research concerning primary data analysis and secondary data analysis.

(a) Primary data – the primary data has been collected by using a structured schedule which consisted of different types of questions in support of the hypothesis objectives. Sample size of two hundred respondents has been taken for interview from the different regions of Patna. The sample size has people from different strata,-including students, working executives, housewives, senior citizens, etc, but students comprise almost fifty percent of the sample size.

(b) Secondary data – the secondary data has been gathered during offer exposure at the Idea Cellular Limited office, Patna, by consulting different executives and from the company's annual reports, in-house journals, and various other texts on Marketing Management.

Major findings of the Research

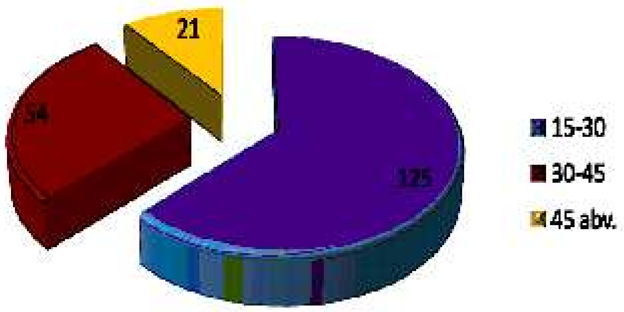
This section exclusively highlights the major findings of our study, and on the basis of our contentions in this section; the endeavor would be towards extracting the major assessment, so that we could prove the hypothetical assumption which we have considered earlier.

FINDINGS

AGE

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	15-30	30-45	45-above
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	125	54	21

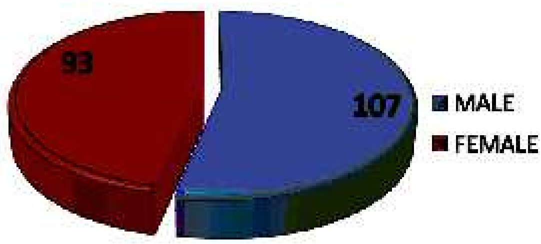
From the above frequency table we can gather that majority of the respondents, ie 125 (62.5%) were from the age group of 15-30 years which consists mostly of students. Out of 200 respondents 54 respondents (27%) belonged to the age group of 30-45 years and only 21 of them (10.5%) were from the age group of 45 years and above.



GENDER

GENDER	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	107	93

The above frequency table clearly states that out of 200 respondents,107 respondents (53.5%) were males, and the rest 93 of them (46.5%) were females.

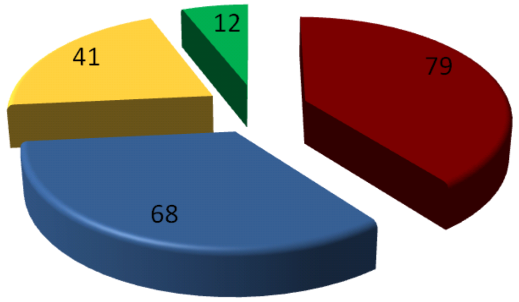


EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

Educational Profile	Under Graduate	Graduate Graduate	Post Graduate	Doctorate
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	79	68	41	12

The above frequency table deals with the educational profile of the respondents. It reflects that out of 200 respondents 79 of them(39.5%) were under graduate, 68 (34%) were graduate, 41(20.5%) were post graduate and only 12 (6%) were doctorate.

EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

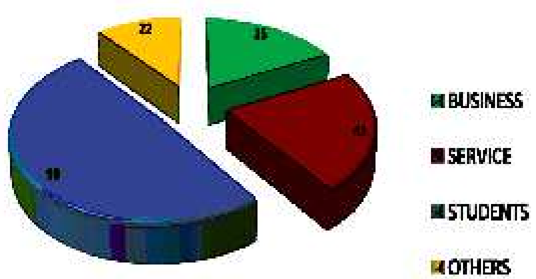


OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE	BUSINESS	SERVICE	STUDENTS	OTHERS
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	35	45	98	22

From the above frequency table, we gather the occupational profile of the respondents. Out of 200 respondents,49% ie,98 respondents were students,45 of them(22.5%) were servicemen and 35 of them(17.5%) were businessmen. The rest 22 respondents (11%) constituted of different occupations.

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

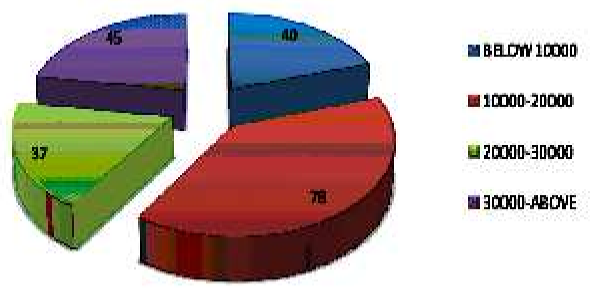


FAMILY EARNINGS PROFILE

FAMILY EARNINGS' PROFILE	BELOW 10000	10000-20000	20000-30000	30000-ABOVE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	40	78	37	45

The above frequency table reflects the family earnings profile. Most of them, ie 78 respondents (39%) belonged to the income group of Rs. 10,000 -20,000. 45 respondents (22.5%) belonged to the income group of Rs.30,000 and above,40 of them (20%) fell in the income group of below Rs 10,000 and only 37 of them (18.5%) belonged to the income group of Rs 20,000 to 30,000.

FAMILY EARNINGS PROFILE



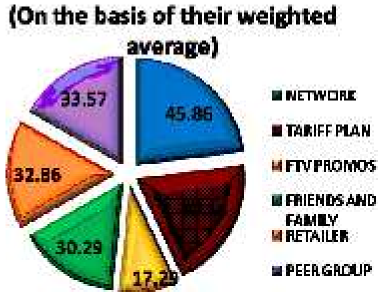
MOST PREFERRED REASON FOR BUYING

REASON FOR BUYING	NETWORK	TARIFF PLAN	FTV PROMOS	FRIENDS AND FAMILY	RETAILER	PEER GROUP
NO. OF RESPON-DENTS	45.86	40.14	17.29	30.29	32.86	33.57

We have taken into account the method of weighted average system to gauge the importance of different reasons of subscribing to a particular brand, by adopting the following formula:

$$\text{Weighted average} = \frac{\sum \text{(no. of respondents x weight assigned)}}{\sum \text{Weight}}$$

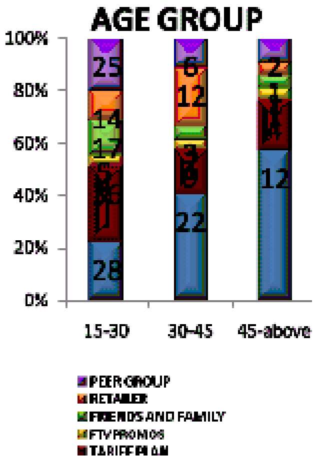
The frequency table reflects the respondents' most preferred reasons for subscribing to a brand. Network with weighted average of 45.56 is the most preferred reason, followed by tariff plan and peer group with 40.14 and 33.57 weighted averages respectively. The weighted average of retailers as a reason is 32.86 and that of friends and family is 30.29. FTV promo with weighted average of 17.29 is the least preferred reason.



Different classification of buying preferences

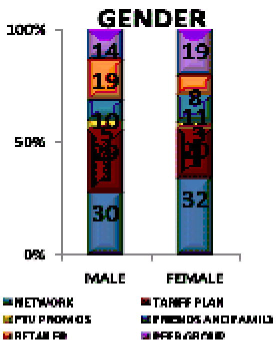
REASON FOR BUYING	NETWORK	TARIFF PLAN PLAN	FTV PROMOS	FRIENDS AND FAMILY	RETAILER	PEER GROUP
15-30	28	36	5	17	14	25
30-45	22	9	2	3	12	6
45-above	12	4	1	1	1	2

Age group wise classification reveals tariff plan to be the most preferred reason of the age group of 15-30 years,preferred by 36 respondents (28.8%). Age group of 30-45 years and that of 45 years and above prefers network most, with 22 (40.74%) and 12 (57.14%) respondents respectively.



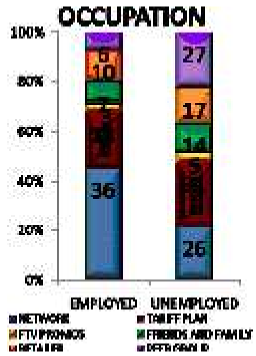
REASON FOR BUYING	NETWORK	TARIFF PLAN	FTV PROMOS	FRIENDS AND FAMILY	RETAILER	PEER GROUP
Male	30	29	5	10	19	14
Female	32	20	3	11	8	19

Gender wise classification reveals that both for males and females the most preferred reason is network, with 30 (28.04%) and 32 (34.41%) respondents respectively.



REASON FOR BUYING	NETWORK	TARIFF PLAN	FTV PROMOS	FRIENDS AND FAMILY	RETAILER	PEER GROUP
Employed	30	29	5	10	19	14
Un-employed	32	20	3	11	8	19

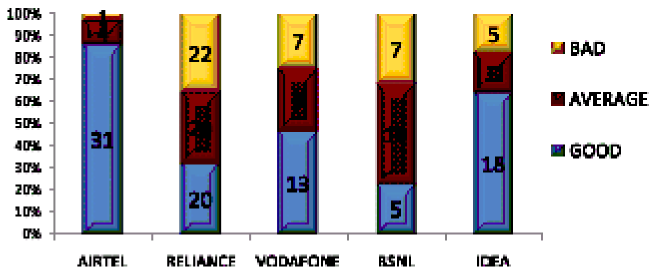
Occupation wise classification reveals network to be the most preferred reason of the employed, with 36 respondents (45%). On the contrary, the unemployed prefer tariff plan most with 31 respondents (33.33%).



EXPERIENCE CONCERNING CALL DROP AND NETWORK COVERAGE

	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODAFONE	BSNL	IDEA
GOOD	31	20	13	05	18
AVERAGE	04	20	08	10	05
BAD	01	22	07	07	05

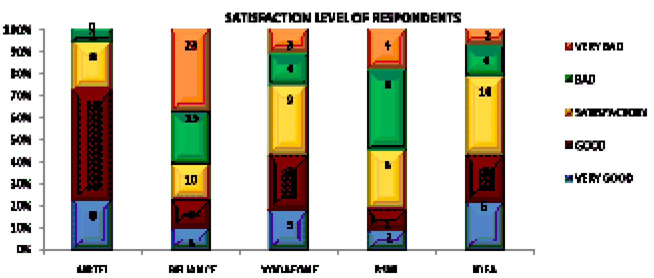
This finding of ours concerns the experience of the respondents with regard to call drop and network coverage.The data chart above shows the classification of responses in terms of good, average, and bad pertaining to the different tele-connectivity service providers.The data chart reflects that most of the Airtel users i.e.31 of them(86.11%) had good network experience.Similarly most Vodafone users, 13(46.43%) and Idea users, 18(64.29%) also had a good experience.Most of the Reliance users, 22 of them(35.48%) had a bad experience, while most BSNL users, 10(45.46%) responded that there network experience was average.



CUSTOMER CARE SERVICES OF MAJOR TELECOM SERVICE OPERATORS

	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODAFONE	BSNL	IDEA
VERY GOOD	8	6	5	2	6
GOOD	18	8	7	2	6
SATISFACTORY	8	10	9	6	10
BAD	2	15	4	8	4
VERY BAD	0	23	3	4	2

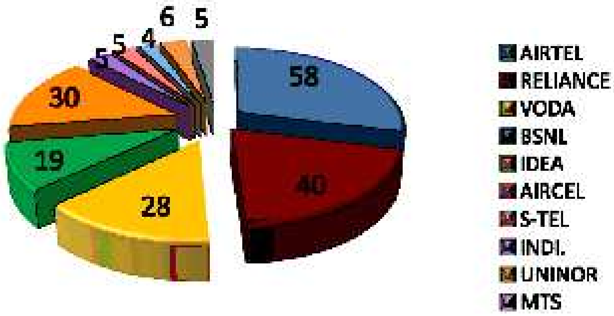
The database as given above, in context with customer care services of major telecom operators, shows the classification of customer care services in terms of very good, good, average, bad, and very bad.The data shows that 18 of Airtel users (50%) considered it's customer care services to be good. Most Vodafone users, 9 (32.14%) and Idea users, 10 (35.71%) classified it's customer care services as satisfactory. While 8 BSNL users (36.36%) classified it as bad, a substantial number of Reliance users, 23 of them(37.10%) classified it's customer care services as very bad.



BRAND RECOMMENDATION

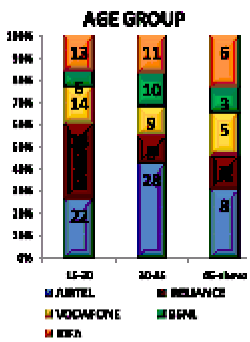
	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODAFONE	BSNL	IDEA	AIRCEL	S-TEL	TATA INDICOM	UNINOR	MTS
NO. OF RESP	58	40	28	19	30	5	5	4	6	5

This finding of ours relates to the respondents' brand recommendation. The data reveals that Airtel recommended by 58 respondents (29%) is the most recommended brand followed by Reliance recommended by 40 respondents(20%). Idea recommended by 30 respondents (15%) is just a step ahead from Vodafone recommended by 28 respondents (14%) respectively. BSNL is recommended by 19 respondents(9.5%) only.The rest brands (Aircel, S-Tel, Tata Indicom, Uninor and MTS) altogether have been recommended by 25 respondents (12.5%).



AGE & OCCUPATION WISE BRAND RECOMMENDATION

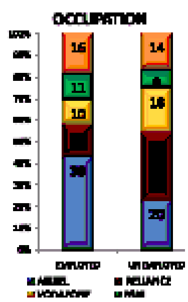
AGE GROUP	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODA.	BSNL	IDEA
15-30	22	28	14	6	13
30-45	28	8	9	10	11
45-above	8	4	5	3	6



Age group wise classification reflects Reliance to be the most recommended brand in the age group of 15-30 years,recommended by 28 rsepondents(22.40%), while Airtel is the most recommended brand in the age group of both 30-45 years and 45 years and above, recommended by 28(51.85%) and 8(38.10%) respondents respectively.

OCCUPATION	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODA.	BSNL	IDEA
Employed	38	13	10	11	16
Un-employed	20	27	18	08	14

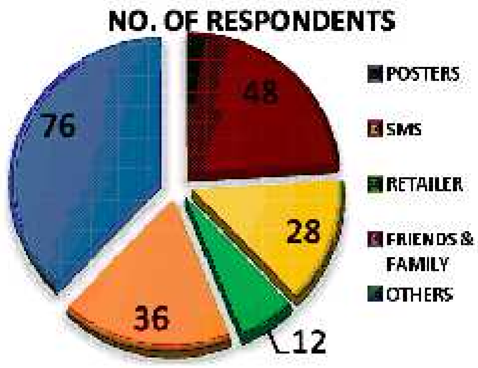
Occupation wise classification reveals Airtel to be the most recommended brand in the employed group, recommended by 38 respondents (47.5%) and Reliance to be the most recommended brand in the unemployed group, recommended by 27 respondents(22.5%).



MAJOR SOURCES OF OFFER/PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION

	POSTERS	SMS	RETAILERS	FRIENDS & FAMILY	OTHERS
No. of resp.	48	28	12	36	76

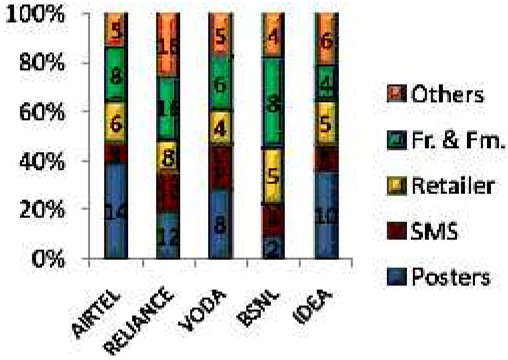
The data chart above helps us arrive at a finding related to the major sources of offer. Posters are the biggest source as indicated by 48 respondents (24%).36 respondents mentioned friends and family as their source. SMS acted as a source for 28 respondents (14%) and retailer for 12 respondents (6%). 76 respondents (38%) indicated sources other than these which include print and electronic media advertisements, word of mouth publicity, etc.



SOURCE OF OFFER/ PROMO INFORMATION OF MAJOR TELECOM OPERATORS

	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODA.	BSNL	IDEA
Posters	14	12	8	2	10
SMS	3	10	5	3	3
Retailers	6	8	4	5	5
Frinds &family	8	17	6	8	4
Others	5	15	5	4	6

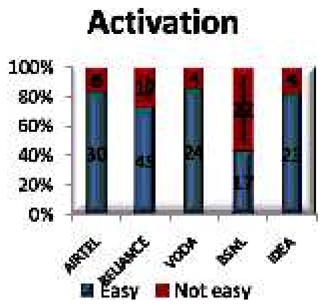
Brand wise classification of the souces of offer reveals posters to be biggest source for Airtel, Vodafone and Idea, responded by 14 (38.89%), 8 (28.57%) and 10 (35.71%) respondents respectively.While for Reliance and BSNL friends and family is the biggest source as indicated by 17(27.42%) and 8(42.11%) respondents respectively.



VAS ACTIVATION/DEACTIVATION

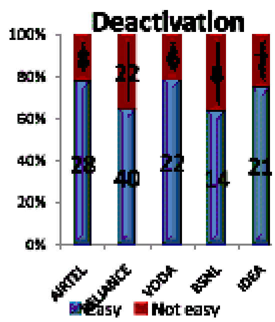
	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODA.	BSNL	IDEA
Easy	30	45	24	17	23
Not easy	6	17	4	22	5

The above data table shows the classification of responses in terms of easy or not easy pertaining to activation of value added services of the major telecom operators.The data reveals that the activation of value added services was easiest in Vodafone with 24 respondents(85.71%) followed by Airtel, Idea and Reliance, and least easy in BSNL with 10 respondents (45.46%).



	AIRTEL	RELIANCE	VODA.	BSNL	IDEA
Easy	28	40	22	14	21
Not easy	8	22	6	8	7

The above data table shows the classification of responses in terms of easy or not easy pertaining to deactivation of value added services of the major telecom operators. The data reveals that the deactivation

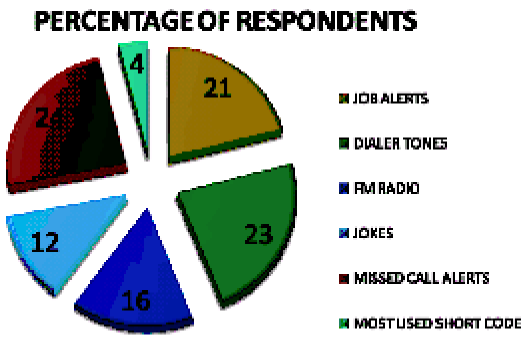


of value added services as well, was easiest in Vodafone with 22 respondents(78.57%) followed by Airtel, Idea and Reliance, and least easy in BSNL with 14 respondents(63.64%).

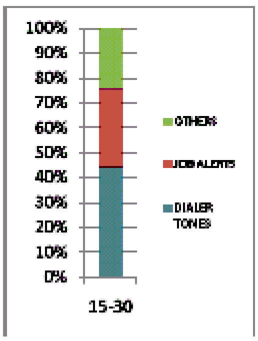
FAVOURITE VAS

	JOB ALERT	DIALER TONES	FM RADIO	JOKES	MISSED CALL ALERTS	MOST USED SHORT CODES
No. of resp.	21	23	16	12	24	4

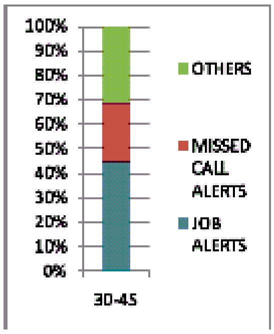
This finding of ours relates to the favourite Value Added Service(VAS).The data table above shows that missed call alerts was the favourite VAS of the majority of respondents i.e. 48(24%), followed by dialer tones with 46(23%), job alerts with 42(21%), FM Radio with 32(16%0 and jokes with 24(12%) respondents respectively.Most used short code was least liked/preferred as indicated by just 8 respondents(4%).



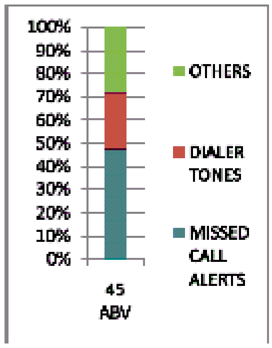
	DIALER TONES	JOB ALERTS	OTHERS
15–30	55	39	31



	JOB ALERTS	MISSED CALL	ALERTSOTHERS
30–45	24	13	17



	MISSED CALL ALERTS	DIALER TONES	OTHERS
45 Above	10	5	6



Age group wise classification indicates that dialer tones was the favourite VAS of the age group of 15-30 years with 55 respondents (44%), job alerts was the favorite VAS of the age group of 30-45 years with 24 respondents (44.44%) and missed call alerts was the favorite VAS of the age group of 45 years and above with 10 respondents (47.62%).

IMPRESSIONS

The following points specify and highlight the impressions drawn from this research study:

1. Network is the most preferred reason for subscribing to a brand.
2. Airtel gives the best network experience with regard to call drop and call congestion.
3. Airtel provides the most satisfying customer care services.

4. Airtel is the most recommended brand, followed by Reliance.
5. Posters are the biggest source of offer, followed by print and electronic media advertisements.
6. VAS activation/ deactivation is easiest in Vodafone.
7. Missed call alerts is the favourite VAS followed by Dialer Tones and Job Alerts.

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