e-ISSN : 2347 - 9671, p- ISSN : 2349 - 0187
EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review | Vol - 3, Issue- 7, July 2015
Inno Space (SJIF) Impact Factor : 4.618(Morocco) ISI Impact Factor : 1.259 (Dubai, UAE)

THE MOBILE REVOLUTION AMONG THE YOUTH POPULATION

Dr Lavanya Rekha Bahadur[1]

Vice-Principal,
H. R. College of Commerce & Economics,
Mumbai, Maharashtra,
India

ABSTRACT

The mobile cellular network in India has transformed the way people communicate, market products, conduct businesses and many other things. The survey was done for ages 16-29 years as they were the best description of the youth in Mumbai to study the attitude of teenagers and youth towards cellular phones. Furthermore, this study tries to understand the relation of young people towards functionality and other aspects of cellular phones and cellular networks.

KEY WORDS: *Cellular Phones, Youth, Revolution, Phone Revolution, Cellular Network, Phone Handsets*

INTRODUCTION

The mobile cellular network in India has grown tremendously. since 2000. It has transformed the way people communicate, market products, conduct businesses etc. The major players in cellular network are the following:

- Airtel
- Vodafone
- Idea Cellular
- Tata DoCoMo
- Reliance Communications
- State run BSNL/MTNL

There are many smaller players like Aircel, Videocon, MTS, Uninor etc. with operations in only a few states.

Around half of India's one billion population is under 30 years of age and is at the forefront of the mobile phone revolution. With large numbers, an inclination to emergent and upgraded technologies and a high propensity to purchase, the youth segment forms a sizeable portion of the cellular market.

METHODOLOGY

Definition of the population

The survey was done for ages 16-29 years as they were the best description of the youth in Mumbai.

Sampling Technique

The stratified random sampling technique was used because the study was conducted only to understand the cellular usage of the youth in Mumbai

Sample Size

A sample serves as a representation of the entire population. A total of 100 people responded to the questionnaire from the various areas in Mumbai.

SCOPE OF STUDY

To study the attitude of teenagers and youth, age group 16-29 years, towards cellular phones and enumerate the usage patterns and arrive at peculiarities, gender-wise or age-wise if any. Furthermore, this study tries to understand the relation of young people towards functionality and other aspects of cellular phones and cellular network.

Table 1: Age Groups Split Between Respondents

AGE GROUPS (years)	No. of Respondents	%
16-19	29	29
20-24	47	47
25-29	24	24

Table 2: Gender Wise Split between Respondents

GENDER	No. of Respondents	%
Male	44	44
Female	56	56

As Table 1 depicts, the study was conducted for the youth of Mumbai which should have been equally representative of all the ages; however, this study is a little skewed towards the 20-24 age bracket and may represent more of their opinions on cellular usage than the other age groups. Though this is still a depiction of the youth and will give critical information in this study.

Table 2 shows that the gender analysis is more or less the same and this study will provide a balanced analysis of genders on cellular usage and therefore, both the genders will be equally represented and there won't be any limitation of the study in this case.

MOBILE PHONE OWNERSHIP

Table 3 Mobile Phone ownership

Mobile Phone Ownership	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	100	100
No	0	0

This is an interesting statistic as it clearly indicates that everyone who answered the survey owned a mobile phone. This statistic may not be as clear as 100% a few years before but now, every single person since they are a teen gets their own cellular phone. This shows the advent of technology, development and advancement in Mumbai, the financial capital of India. It is important to note that this statistic might not be true for India as a whole since Mumbai is a metro and the city is undoubtedly richer than other parts of India so the youth will also get certain privileges.

Table 4: Reasons for Purchasing a Mobile Phone

Purchase Reasons	No. of Respondents
All the friends/colleagues had one	16
Safety Reasons	63
Needed because of frequent travelling	23
Easy to communicate with relatives/friends/Family	36
No landline at home	07
For various other functions provided by the handset	45
Other	04

The respondents were allowed to select **more than one option** and many selected various options, the most common being safety reasons which was 63 respondents out of 100 selected this option. These people also selected other options but safety ranked the highest. This is a critical statistic because in Mumbai, many people do feel like they need to be in constant touch with someone or the other for safety purposes. The other two most common reasons for purchasing a mobile phone was to take advantage of the various other features provided by the handset and to easily communicate with relatives/ friends and family with the numbers being 45 and 36 respondents respectively. Some bought because of peer pressure of their friends and colleagues owning a mobile phone which common in the teenage group especially.

PREFERENCE OF MOBILES AND ITS QUALITIES

Table 5: Various mobile phone brand preference of respondents

Mobile Brand	No. of Respondents/Percentage
Apple	29
Samsung	33
Motorola	19
Sony	12
Blackberry	06
Other	01

Most of the respondents either currently owned an Apple or Samsung mobile phone, the numbers being 29% and 33% respectively. This is coinciding with the world domination of these brands over mobile phone handsets. Sony and Motorola are trying to have a foothold in this market and are succeeding to some extent while Blackberry has completely lost the once almost monopoly that it had over mobiles in the urban market of Mumbai.

Table 6: Attributes respondents look for while buying a mobile phone

Attributes	No. of Respondents
Price	76
Design	52
Sound	36
Durability	33
Brand	71
Size	06
Other	10

As the above table illustrates, respondents were asked to choose any number of qualities that they look for while choosing a mobile phone. These qualities ranged from price to brands as the youth can be responsive to various qualities. The highest votes were given to price which indicates that the youth is **price-sensitive** and this is important to note because during this period of their lives, the youth either use their parents' money to buy or they might have jobs of their own and just starting to save. In both cases, they will be susceptible to making sure the phone isn't exorbitantly expensive. Most respondents also were **brand-conscious** and did make sure that the phone they were purchasing was trendy and famous for its features.

NETWORK PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION

Table 7: Various network preference of respondents

Network	No. of Respondents/Percentage
Airtel	36
Vodafone	47
Idea Cellular	11
Tata DoCoMo	02
Reliance Communications	04
Other	00

There is a duopoly currently, as far as the youth is concerned, in the network preference between Vodafone and Airtel as the number of respondents was close between them at 47% and 36% respectively. The youth are very concerned about branding and good offers and these brands have been around for the longest time as well as the offers they give are good. Furthermore, the customer service branches of these network brands are available and accessible easily throughout the city. This study tried to understand how these network preferences worked for the customers through the following questions and tables.

Table 8: Network Problems

Problems	No of Respondents
Always	13
Sometimes	68
Never	19

As the aforementioned table depicts, most respondents which is a high percentage of 68% face network problems sometime or the other, which means that even though only very few respondents are completely network problem-free which is a mere 19%, they still stick to the current network and don't change it. This shows **brand loyalty** as respondents don't like to change often and rather stick with their own number. Earlier, this could have been due to the fact that they would have to change their number if they planned to change their network, but now they MNP or Mobile Number Portability has come into the picture, most people don't have that issue and instead just prefer sticking to what they are used to.

Table 9: Rating of Quickness of Customer Service provided by the Network by Respondents (with 1 being the best)

Quickness Rating	Number of Respondents
1	22
2	15
3	24
4	09
5	30

Table 10: Rating of Effectiveness of Customer Service provided by the Network by Respondents (with 1 being the best)

Effectiveness Rating	Number of Respondents
1	43
2	23
3	17
4	13
5	10

Table 9 and Table 10 depict the respondents' feelings towards the quickness and effectiveness of the customer service of their network providers. These ratings highlight that the network providers may not have the quickest service, but they usually are effective in making sure that the customers are satisfied and go home with high satisfaction. Only 22% of respondents gave their network providers a rating of 1 while a majority of 43% gave a rating of 1 for the effectiveness of the customer service. Certain customer centres have an organized system of numbers which automatically get redirected and appear quickly so the right person comes into contact with the customer at the first instance even though waiting may be long during certain periods of the day. It is important to understand that not all the people who find the customer service slow will also find it ineffective. The 30% who found it slow can find the service effective while the 10% who found the service ineffective could actually feel that the customer service was fast enough for their liking. Essentially, all the network providers realise that effectiveness is more important that quickness and they need to first focus on making their services completely effective and then try to make it quick.

PREPAID OR POST-PAID USAGE

Table 11: Number of respondents who chose between pre-paid or post-paid method

Method of Payment	Number of Respondents/Percentage
Pre-Paid	38
Post-Paid	62

Most of the youth prefer post-paid which is 62% while the rest 38% went for pre-paid services while choosing the method of billing and talk-time. The youth is keen on post-paid because they would prefer talking and enjoying the services of the network without constantly bothering to check whether they have reached their talk-time level and have to recharge again. The ones who take pre-paid like to keep a track on how much they are spending.

PREPAID OPTION ANALYSIS

Table 12: If You Use Prepaid, How Often Do You Recharge?

Prepaid Recharge Frequency	Number of Respondents	%
Weekly	00	00
Monthly	33	86.84
2 Months	04	10.53
Less than a year	01	2.63
A year	00	00

Table 12 and Table 13 show the number of respondents who used prepaid method of payment and their frequency of recharge as well as their average recharge amount, each time they recharge their talk-time. Table 12 clearly shows a majority of respondents who use pre-paid method recharge their balance every month which is 33 respondents out of 38 or a striking 86.84%. The reason for this is because monthly is the most convenient option for most people as they don't have to recharge too often and since they are youngsters who are tech-savvy and use their phone pretty often, they will need to replenish their talk-time at least as often as per month.

Table 13: Payment Amount Each Time You Recharge

Prepaid Recharge Amount	Number of Respondents	%
Less than Rs. 100	02	5.26
Rs. 100 to Rs. 500	14	36.84
Rs. 500 to Rs.1000	19	50
More than Rs. 1000	04	10.53

Table 13 depicts the average amount that respondents recharge with every month and most people are either in the bracket of 100-500 which is 36.84% or in the bracket of 500-1000 which is 50% of the youth surveyed. There are very few people at the extremes which are almost negligible. This shows that most of the youngsters surveyed required a certain amount of talk-time that they utilised and in a metro city like Mumbai, mobiles are used to stay connected and most people prefer using mobiles than landlines. This shows that youngsters can spend a pretty large amount on recharge using pre-paid. However, since they keep track of how much they talk, this limits them to a certain extent compared to post-paid users.

POST-PAID OPTION ANALYSIS

Table 14: If You Use Post-Paid, What Is Your Average Monthly Bill Amount?

Prepaid Recharge Amount	Number of Respondents	%
Less than 500	08	12.90
500-1000	26	41.94
1000-1500	21	33.87
1500-5000	12	19.35
5000-10000	01	1.61

Table 14 shows the average monthly billing amount paid by the respondents who used post-paid method of payment. Most people are either in the bracket of 500-1000 which is 41.94% or in the bracket of 1000-1500 which is 33.87% of the youth surveyed. As illustrated through the table before as well, most of the youngsters surveyed in a metro city like Mumbai lead a particular lifestyle and use mobile phones to stay connected and fulfil their requirements of remaining updated and in contact with people. This also portrays that youngsters can spend a pretty large amount on billing when they use the post-paid method.

CELLULAR PHONE SERVICES USAGE

Table 15: On an average, the number of hours in a day that you use cell phones?

Number of Hours	No of Respondents
<1 Hour	00
1 Hour to 3 Hours	32
3 Hours – 5 Hours	49
>5 Hours	19

As Table 15 illustrates, none of the respondents said that they use their phone for less than an hour every day. A majority of 49% of people surveyed said that they use it between 3 hours to 5 hours every day which means that on an average they spend around one-fourth of their day simply using their mobile phones instead of doing other productive work. Some even use it beyond that which is very detrimental to the work they do. Some people may actually have work that must require cell phones like most PR agents or sales people which is probably why the statistic is very high. But one can't help note that the youth in Mumbai and other metro cities may slowly become addicted to this device and ignore other aspects of their lives.

Table 16: Are You Aware About The Health Side Effects Of Using Cellular Phones?

Awareness	No of Respondents
Yes	73
No	27

As Table 16 depicts, most people are aware of the side-effects that continued mobile phone usage can have to their health which are a large 73% of people compared to 27% who weren't fully aware. While cell phones provide an efficient and easy way to communicate with friends, family and co-workers, excessive use can take a toll on a person's health including negatively affectingtheir emotions, increasing stress levels; increasing probability of chronic pain, eye vision problems and illnesses to immune system etc. Mobile phones transmit radio waves and this exposure to radiation has proved to be harmful in many cases all over the world including in Mumbai.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the study has provided many realisations of the perceptions that the youth have about their cellular usage habits. The research was conducted with a large sample, a balance in gender and a broad range of age brackets within the youth of Mumbai. It was noticed that in a metro city like Mumbai, brand consciousness plays a very important role while choosing which phone to buy which is why Apple and Samsung came out at the top even though most of their handsets are on the luxury price category. Safety plays a very critical role when figuring out the reason for the purchase of mobile phones which 100% of the youth had. A majority gave safety reason as their choice.

Under cellular network preferences, it was noticed that in Mumbai, Vodafone and Airtel are the most commonly used network brands and most people are happy with their choice and don't wish to change to any other network. This is because even though the customer service of these brands may not be as quick as people want it to be, they are ultimately effective in most cases which is what the people are eventually looking for. Many people which is 68% found that they had faced network problems at least sometimes but they have still stuck to their network providers which means that they don't like to change often and believe that such problems are common.

Thus, this study showed that the youth of Mumbai are aware about the side-effects of continued usage to mobile phones on their health and the detrimental effects that it can have on their studies but yet can't manage without a phone and use it for a large period of their time daily for using various features on the phone such as camera, social networking, messaging and phone calling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Network Providers should focus on improving their customer service effectiveness and then quickness to ensure that customers are satisfied and continue to remain with the network.
- Customers are brand-conscious and thus, mobile phone brands must try to have a USP (Unique Selling Point) and market their product appropriately, build a strong brand and then, the sales will follow.

- Many people have experienced network problems and this must be looked upon by network companies to ensure that the customers are satisfied with the network.
- The youth must try to limit the usage of their mobile phones and not become addicted to this device as it can have several side-effects to their health as well as hamper their studies.

(No bibliography as this study is done purely based on primary data)

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