



IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE OF INTERNET PLANS AMONG CUSTOMERS – A STUDY IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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Abstract

Internet is a worldwide network of computers resources. It has emerged as an important source of information for all sections of people. Faster and widely available internet is considered an important requirement for communication, public administration entrepreneurship and innovation in the community. Internet is the main source of academic reference. Internet services are available in all parts the country including rural and remote areas. Customers availing the internet services are spread across various demographic, geographic, and socio economic groups of the society. As internet services are widely used by the public, also much technological advancement are coming up every day, the internet service providers need to understand their customers, in order to segment their potential and profitable customer market. Mobile Internet penetration in India is growing at a fast clip and holds a promising future with every player in the ecosystem having their own important role to play and contribution to make.

Key words: Internet services, Customers, Service Providers.

Introduction

Internet is a worldwide network of computers resources. It has emerged as an important source of information for all sections of people. Faster and widely available internet is considered an important requirement for communication, public administration entrepreneurship and innovation in the community. Internet is the main source of academic reference. Internet services are available in all parts the country including rural and remote areas. Customers availing the internet services are spread across various demographic, geographic, and socio economic groups of the society.

Internet is the most important advent of Information Technology. Internet today represents millions of computers around the world connected in a single network in which the ranges of services are available. Internet is a worldwide network of computers resources. It has emerged as an important source of information for all sections of people. Faster and widely available internet is considered an important requirement for communication, public administration entrepreneurship and innovation in the community. Internet is the main source of academic reference. Internet services are available in all parts the country including rural and remote areas. Internet is a world-wide computer network that can be accessed via a computer, mobile telephone, PDA, games machine, digital TV, etc. The Internet be accessed through a fixed (wired) or mobile network: analogue dial-up modem via standard telephone line, ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or ADSL, Cable modem, High speed leased lines, Fiber, Power line, Satellite broadband network, Wi-MAX, Fixed CDMA, Mobile broadband network (3G, 4G, e.g. UMTS) via a handset or card, Integrated SIM card in a computer, or USB modem. An Internet User is therefore defined as an individual who can access the Internet, via computer or mobile device, within the home where the individual lives.

Statement of the Problem

In the present age of information Technology, use of Internet is becoming quite popular for accessing information on any topic of interest. It also provides tremendous opportunities to students; researchers and professionals for getting information on matters related to academic and professional topics and lot more. In the present world, most of the people who have computers around themselves use Internet to access information from the World Wide Web, exchange messages and documents and e-services.

Scope of the Study

The present study is confined to the geographical area of Coimbatore District, including all urban and rural areas in the district. This study will focus on the internet service users through an identifiable single telephone, mobile phone or a computer. Internet access through Wi-Fi connections are covered in this study as it is an institutional arrangement for a mass.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of awareness on internet among the internet users.
2. To identify the factors influencing the purchase decisions of the internet users.

Methodology

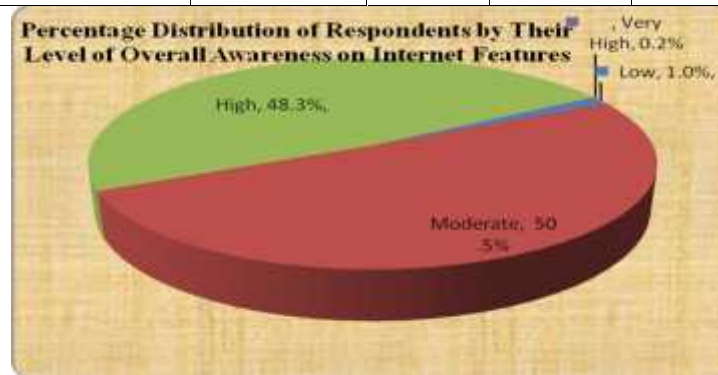
This research is a micro level study based on primary data to be collected from a sample of Internet users with special attention to the services in Urban and Rural areas in Coimbatore District. A represented sample of internet service is selected by stratified, multistage sampling method. Secondary data for selecting the sample were also available.

Method of Analyzing data: For analyzing the data Standard Deviation and t Test were used with the help of SPSS.

Overall Level of Awareness

Overall awareness is assessed through the average of the scores of all features of internet. Average score for urban stratum is computed as 3.02 and for the rural stratum the average score is 3.03. Overall average score is 3.024. As these scores are for 5, the percentage of awareness worked out as 60.4% for urban, 60.6% for rural and the overall level of awareness is 60.48%. Overall average score varies between 1 and 5. The average scores are classified as Very Low (up to 1), Low (1-2), Moderate (2-3), High (3-4) and very high (4-5). Analysis revealed that 48.3% of the respondents have high level of awareness on the features of internet. However, about 50.6% of respondents have only moderate level of awareness and another 1% have only low level of awareness. Distribution of Respondents by their Level of Overall Awareness on the Features of Internet is presented in Table.

Level of Overall Awareness		Urban	Rural	Total
Low	Count	3	3	6
	% of Total	.5%	.5%	1.0%
Moderate	Count	167	143	310
	% of Total	27.2%	23.3%	50.6%
High	Count	151	145	296
	% of Total	24.6%	23.7%	48.3%
Very High	Count	0	1	1
	% of Total	.0%	.2%	.2%
Total	Count	321	292	613
	% of Total	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%



Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Their Level of Overall Awareness on Internet Features. Source: Primary data collected by the Researcher

Influencing Factors In Purchasing Internet Services

Second objective of the study is to identify the factors influencing the purchase decisions of the internet users which is addressed in this section. Buying strategies include certain pressure from a dependable source to buy a particular product or service. Being a technological advent, internet is not an exception to this. Buyers of internet service may be influenced by many sources. The survey questionnaire included seven type influencing sources such as Newspapers, Television and Radio, Websites and Internet, Family Members, Friends and Relatives, Retail Service Provider, Employer organization etc

in the purchase decisions of internet. The response were captured on a five point Likert's scaling from Very Highly influenced, Highly influenced, Moderately influenced, Lowly influenced, Very Lowly influenced which have been converted to numerical scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. To assess the level of influence of the sources, average score s have been computed. Analysis of data reveal that Newspaper is the top influencing source for buying internet service with an average score of 4.47, followed by Television/Radio with an average score of 4.01. Descriptive statistics on the influence of included sources are presented in Table: 1.1

Table : 1.1 Descriptive Statistics on Various Influencing Sources

Source of Influence	Domicile	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Newspapers	Urban	321	4.44	.600
	Rural	292	4.51	.628
	Total	613	4.47	.614
Television, Radio	Urban	321	4.02	.630
	Rural	292	4.01	.647
	Total	613	4.01	.638
Websites and Internet	Urban	321	3.82	.602
	Rural	292	3.91	.638
	Total	613	3.86	.621
Family Members	Urban	321	2.90	.460
	Rural	292	2.90	.444
	Total	613	2.90	.452
Friends and Relatives	Urban	321	2.91	.469
	Rural	292	2.89	.475
	Total	613	2.90	.472
Retail Service Provider	Urban	321	2.89	.476
	Rural	292	2.90	.480
	Total	613	2.90	.477
Employer organization	Urban	321	2.02	.594
	Rural	292	2.05	.612
	Total	613	2.04	.602

Source: Primary data collected by the Researcher

t Test to Compare Average Levels of Influence of the Sources

t Test was applied to test the Null Hypothesis: H_0 : There is no significant difference between the average levels of influence of the sources between rural and urban respondents in buying internet services. The alternate hypothesis was H_1 : There is a significant difference between the average levels of influence of the sources between rural and urban respondents in buying internet services. The t- test was carried out through SPSS software and the results indicated that the value of p is less than 0.05 for all sources. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance and inferred that there is no significant difference between the average levels of influence of the sources for the rural and urban respondents. Results of the t Test for comparing the average level of influence of sources are presented in Table: 1.2

Table: 1.2 Results of the t Test for comparing the average level of influence of sources

Source of Influence	Value of t	df	Sig. p (2-tailed)
Newspapers	-1.500	611	.134
Television, Radio	.036	611	.971
Websites and Internet	-1.822	611	.069
Family Members	-.189	611	.850
Friends and Relatives	.415	611	.679
Retail Service Provider	-.082	611	.934
Employer organization	-.677	611	.499

Source: Primary data collected by the Researcher



Findings of the Study

1. About 48.3% of the respondents have high level of awareness on the features of internet. However, about 50.6% of respondents have only moderate level of awareness and another 1% has only low level of awareness. Level of awareness only on E-mail and Browsing differ significantly between rural and urban respondents.
2. Newspaper and Television/Radio are the main influencing source for buyers of internet service.
3. Education and Business Developments are the most popular purposes of using internet both in urban and rural areas.

Suggestions

The market strategy requires market segmentation by gender, age, and income status of the buyers. This study shows that, females, youth and middle-income groups are the target buyers for internet market segmentation. As a major proportion of the respondents are youth, internet market strategy may focus on segmenting towards the youth, with features desired by them.

Newspaper and Television/Radio are found to be most influencing sources in buying of internet services. Service providers may float their advertisements mainly on these media.

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