



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

CODEN: IJRSFP (USA)

*International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*  
Vol. 8, Issue, 9, pp. 19692-19695, September, 2017

**International Journal of  
Recent Scientific  
Research**

DOI: 10.24327/IJRSR

## Research Article

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT AMONGST RURAL AND URBAN CONSUMERS OF SMART PHONE

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2017.0809.0745>

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2017  
Received in revised form 14<sup>th</sup>  
July, 2017  
Accepted 08<sup>th</sup> August, 2017  
Published online 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

##### Key Words:

Rural Consumer, Consumer Involvement,  
Personal Computers.

#### ABSTRACT

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the mobile phone industry. In India consumers' mobile phones have become essential part of personal and business life. The disposable income of rural and urban consumers has increased steadily; there has been a major change in the attitude and desire of consumers. This research is to find out external and internal factors which influence a consumer's decision in purchasing a smart phone. Each consumer behaves differently from other users. Marketers should find out how the consumers gather information and how they apply such information in choosing competing products, how consumers buy and why buy process and buy reasons for different consumers.

Purpose of this study is investigating the relationship between consumer involvement and purchase decision (for smart phone) in rural and urban mobile customer. Data was collected from sample of 120 consumers from rural and urban areas so that the degree of consumer involvement would be reached and described some reasons behind the consumer involvement.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization in rural areas has attracted large-scale population flows from rural areas and small towns in major cities of the country. Foreign investment is also a critical factor primarily on account of the capital intensive nature of the sector. Especially after the opening up of the economy, India and its people are enjoying the speed of change in their socio-cultural environment. Due to the advancement of IT in all areas, whether it may be urban or rural, the need of mobile phones is constantly increasing. The purpose of the study is therefore to make a comparative analysis of smart phones in rural regions catapulted by factors like information process and consumer involvement. As rapid socio-economic changes flourish across India, the country is witnessing the formation of many new markets and a further expansion of the existing ones. People above 300 are running from rural poor to rural lower middle class between 2005 and 2025, and by 2017 the level of rural consumption is likely to increase to the existing urban level (ibef.org, 2009). Rural consumer markets are seeing rapid changes and development across the country. Rural customer is influenced by various types of social and economic processes, e.g. globalisation, urbanisation, shift of economy towards services, changing lifestyles and thus purchasing behaviour of rural market consumers. Complex social behaviour drives purchasing behaviour and exerted both rational and subjective

influence on customer choice of the brands, products or procurement channels. Marketing researchers instantaneously attempt to narrate purchasing behaviour and related dimensions such as media use to personality of the consumer. New approaches, models and concepts have been emerged with a note of success and applicable in determining the marketing strategies.

#### *Consumer Involvement as Determinant for Purchasing Behaviour*

Consumer Involvement is defined as a mental state that motivates rural and urban consumers to recognize product or service offerings, their buying behaviour. Involvement creates an adjuration to find out and think about the product category and the commute options before making decisions on final purchase within consumers. It is the amount of mental and substantial effort that a rural and urban consumer puts into a purchase decision. It creates a level of ability or personal importance to the product or service offering and this leads to an instance to collect and interpret information for present and future decision making and use within a person.

Involvement affects the consumer information processing and the sub processes of information search, information transmission and decision for purchase. Consumer participation refers to a degree of processing which connect a consumer to

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the product. When more expensive products are to be purchased, the consumer gets more involved in process but each consumer behaves differently from other user.

**Definitions of Involvement**

<b>Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L.</b>	<b>Involvement is a high level of awareness, which inspires consumers to know, participate, and think about product information before making a purchase.</b>
Herbert Krugman	Consumers approach the market place and the corresponding product/service offerings with varying levels and intensity of interest and personal importance. This is referred to as consumer involvement.

**Involvement: Origins**

Involvement arises from social psychology and especially from persuasive communication literature, where the social decision-sharing approach is used to change the attitude and behaviour (Sherif and Sargent, 1947).

**Classifications and Types**

**Product Involvement:** It is shows the consumers’ interest and effort put in for purchasing of a product or brand (Zaichkowsky, 1985)

**Buying Involvement:** This type of involvement is represents a 'mental state' as a temporary concern with a stimulus object. Definitions look at this form of involvement in the form of intensity, which means degree, interest, motivation, or stimulus.

**Behavioural Involvement:** This form of participation refers to a behavioural orientation including information acquisition and decision making processes (Leavitt, et al., 1981).

Involvement seems to be a vague concept, because it is connected to a variety of mobile phone purchasing modes. The concept of partnership is used in attitude towards attitude principles and products. It claims that people are involved with more or less social issues. In this study, customer involvement is related to cognitive conditions which are influenced by the importance of the two aspects Purchasing power and the personal attachment of the purchase. However In marketing, consumers are included with different advertising and ad media, category of products and purchase decisions. Although there is no definite definition of Involvement in marketing, it is a consensus that Involvement is a personal level and internal variable that gives back the importance of personal goals to goals and events (Abdolvand & Nikfar, 2011).

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Mostly developed countries did the studies on Consumer Involvement and especially in the United States. (O’Cass 2000). In India, study on consumer participation was given little attention, except for some studies (Avinandan and Anirban 1996). Initial evidence to suggest consumer involvement is a better predictor of behavior than innovativeness in markets where two relatively mature technologies compete side by side Hynes, N. and Lo, S. (2006). Neshat Choubtarash, Omid Mahdieh and Ahmad Barati Marnani (2013) in their study pointed out that consumer behavior involves many activities. Malviya et.al., (2013) in

their study focused on the factors Influencing Consumer's Purchase Decision towards Smart phones in Indore. The main purpose of this research is to identify the key factors that make an impressive impact on the mind of consumers while consumers buy smart phones. It was found that data is reliable for factor analysis. The measurement model has suggested four factor values, brand preferences, social impact and features which have an impact on consumers' purchase decision in Indore. Pinni Vasantha Lakshmi (2011) examined that Marketers want to know how buying partnership affects consumer behavior because such knowledge helps in better understanding of consumers and to segment and target those consumers who can react positively to their product or service communication. This study investigated the relationship between purchasing involvement and influence of women in the family purchase decision making of durable goods. Segmentation of women was done based on the factors influencing their purchasing involvement. The study has evaluated eight major purchasing partnership factors of women, i.e. discrimination, cleverness, value consciousness, triviality, hassle-free, calm, indifference and brand futility. Das (2012) did an empirical research based on the survey methodology in Odisha's coastal districts in India, the factors affecting the behavior of young consumers for mobile handsets. According to the study, features, enjoyment and applicability with respectable brand, smart appearance and handset of advanced standard; Young consumers' choice; Women in the gender group, postgraduates in the level of education group, students of business group, play the most role in the urban residents of the geographical area group. Malasi (2012) examined the effect of product characteristics on mobile phone preferences among undergraduate university students in Kenya. Studies have indicated that in lieu of product characteristics, there is an effect on the preferences of undergraduate students on mobile phones. Various aspects of product and brand characteristics were considered for colour themes, visual name labels and various models of mobile phones, packaging for safety, and degree of awareness on security issues, phone design and design. As a result, consumer participation should be kept in mind by the marketers who want to increase their profit by increasing consumers' purchasing trend and purchasing behaviour.

Among such studies, there are a very few which attempted to examine the rural consumer and urban customer involvement specifically in the field of mobile phones.

H1: there are different customer Involvement in between Rural and Urban Customer for the Mobile Purchase.

**Objectives of Study**

1. To study customer Involvement amongst rural urban consumers on purchase decision of smart phones.
2. To suggest some measures for positioning the smart phones in minds of consumers.

**Sampling Plan**

**Sampling Unit:** For the research total 120 respondents were selected, 60 from rural and 60 from urban areas.

**Sampling Techniques:** For the study convenience sampling technique was used. In this 999999 sampling method, the

researcher has collected the data as per their convenience in terms of location, cost, time, etc.

The secondary data of this special study was collected through national and international journals, journals and other current reports which were based on this topic. In secondary data, researchers helped in better understanding consumer behavior towards Mobile Purchase. Thus the primary data was studied and analyzed with the importance of secondary data.

Survey depends on the primary data collected through a well-prepared and structured questionnaire to better understand the views of the respondents. The closing question was asked to analyze the pre-determined objectives.

**Statistical Analysis of Data**

The data coded in excel using Ms-Office package. The coded data was then analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. First all questions were subjected to frequency analysis and item total correlation to check whether the scale is measuring any variation or not. Thereafter, the reliability and validity of the scale were done using Cronbach’s Co-efficient Alpha. MANOVA was applied to examine the variables which are important for measuring the factors for consumer involvement. The reliability of the questionnaire was. 89.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the consumer involvement of rural and urban consumers on smart phones. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between purchasing of smart phones and consumer involvement attributing to social, emotional, consumption patterns and knowledge.

MANOVA was used to uncover group of rural and urban consumers’ differences across multiple variables in a design with one factor (consumer involvement). MANOVA was used to investigate the effect of different factors of consumer involvement on purchase decision of smart phones. The dependent variables are *Product Involvement*, *Purchase Involvement* and *Behavioural Involvement* and the independent variable the purchase decision of rural and urban consumers. The results of the MANOVA were presented in the following tables.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significance difference between rural and urban regarding mobile phones on “Consumer Involvement”

**Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices**

**Table 1** Model Summary

Box's M	6.781
F	1.099
df1	6
df2	1.009E5
Sig.	.360

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Customer	Product_Involmtent	10.800	1	10.800	7.987	.006	.063
	Purchase_Involvement	.033	1	.033	.023	.880	.000
	Behavioural_Involvement	2.408	1	2.408	1.588	.210	.013

Since the calculated value is larger than the critical value (.360>.005), we reject the null hypothesis. There is significant

difference in the rural and urban regarding mobile phones on “Consumer Involvement”

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Since (.006< .025) the test is significant (urban and rural Mobile buyers are significantly different for Product Involvement). Purchase Involvement and Behavioural Involvement are not significantly different for urban and rural Mobile buyers as (.880>.025) and (.210>.025) respectively.

**Managerial Implications**

An understanding of the consumer involvement on buyer behavior of rural and urban for mobile phone will assist managers in the management of customer decision support systems. Marketers targeting the rural market in the rural area as this one fastest growing market in the India, especially mobile market. Comparison of rural of urban consumer has a great Influence on buying behaviour of mobile. Besides bringing to light the buying behaviour of rural and urban consumer for the mobile phone, this study also highlights an important influence of mobile towards the consumers. This paper adds to the basic idea of consumer involvement on mobile purchase in three major areas. First, it shows that buying behaviour is different for Product involvement for rural and urban mobile consumer. Second, it shows that buying behaviour is not different for purchase involvement for rural and urban mobile consumer. Third, it shows that buying behaviour is not different for behavioural involvement for rural and urban mobile consumer. Hence, managers should be able to tailor communications and the design of the system to target the customer more effectively, which in turn will lead to improved customer relationship management. An appreciation of the Consumer involvement will provide managers with insights into how to develop marketing information systems, especially the promotional and communication strategies in rural market.

**CONCLUSION**

*This research is to analyze the consumer involvement (Product Involvement, Purchase Involvement and Behavioural Involvement) which influence a consumer’s decision in purchasing a smart phone. The research also focuses on consumer attitude for smart phones and the influence brand name has on consumer buying decisions. The recent growth of smart phone usage is an observable fact that crosses all geographical boundaries. Hence, this research explores through quantitative analysis some of the key factors believed to affect consumer involvement. It is also true that both rural and urban consumers use smart phones but urban consumers are more comfortable in operating the technical functions. Urban consumers use phones for their business purpose but rural consumers are more conscious about the security in transactions.*

Study also suggests that there is a significance difference between rural and urban mobile Consumer for Involvement.

## Recommendations

A number of brands of smart phones are exist in the both rural and urban market but each mobile phone manufacturer should carefully re-think its strategy when producing, marketing and distributing these devices and focus on product design and differentiation segmented to both markets.

Study also suggests that there is a significance difference between rural and urban mobile Consumer for Involvement, especially for the product involvement. It is recommended that companies concentrate more on developing quality and affordable mobile phones and spend more time on enhancing their products to offer it at lower prices which can be done by employing cost reduction measures.

## Limitations of the Study

- Due to time constraint, the sample size was in small.
- Misunderstanding of the question can also contribute to inaccuracies in the data.
- The whole population of consumers is not considered in sampling and only a segment is considered. Limited generalizability of the study exists because the findings were limited to only few areas (and may vary if the area of study is changed).
- Some of the respondents have attempted to fill the questionnaires as an act of formality. Some of the respondents might have been biased in their responses and as such the analysis and conclusion based on it could vary to some extent.

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### How to cite this article:

Singh A and Banerjee S. et al. 2017, A Comparative Study of Consumer Involvement Amongst Rural And urban Consumers of Smart Phone. *Int J Recent Sci Res*. 8(9), pp. 19692-19695. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2017.0809.0745>