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Issues and challenges of mobile phone purchase for online classes during Covid-19 - A study with reference to Thiruvallur District

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Abstract:

In the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, schools and colleges are forced to conduct online classes and as a result mobile phones are highly required and used for the various purposes when it is compared to the previous years. The researcher undertook this research work in Thiruvallur district, analysis on issues and challenges of purchase of mobile phones by rural parents for online classes. From the research, it is analyzed that with the passage of time purchase of mobile phones increases day by day because of its usage for various purposes. Mobile phones are available in the market with the various brands and the buying behaviour of the parents will vary from one brand to another. Customers of mobile phones are using online classes for learning or study. Nowadays the mobile phones and other electronic devices are the most essential for the students. The research focus on the decision of the parents to purchase of mobile phones through online shopping or in traditional shopping from stores and the research also extends to identify the problems faced by rural parents.

Keywords: *mobile phones, online purchase, consumer behaviour, rural parents*

Introduction:

In this pandemic situation, mobile phones, computer, laptop and internet connections are more important for students and teachers learning and teaching purpose through online classes. The present day, rural parents are need purchase of mobiles phone due to educational requirements, but the real challenges of parents now, income loss, job

loss due to covid-19 situation. The behaviour of parents is influenced by many important factors such as cultural, economic, social, personal, physical and psychological factors. This research study is intended to focus a study on issues and challenges on purchase of mobile phones by rural parents for online classes during covid-19- with reference to Thiruvallur district. The researcher has to identify real problems of the parents and challenges during this period to buy a mobile phone. In general, rural area people giving more importance of family expenditure such as food, education, provision, rent, electricity bill, TV cable repayment of loan etc., the study of buying behaviour examines how rural parent's deals make decision in spending their available resources, time, and money. In these days, mobile phone has been exceptionally required for specially study purpose in much area of Tamil Nadu. The research is to analyses about parental behavior and problems regarding where mobile phones to purchase, how to arrange money, when to purchase and what types of mobile to be purchase. The researcher has prepared a questionnaire based on the fundamental requirement of the rural people and living standard during pandemic conditions.

Challenges of rural area in India

The government has suggested for taking online class to the schools and colleges, in India. Teachers and students in villages are becoming more accepting towards digital means of learning, but the infrastructural facilities there have not developed fully to become at par with what online learning require. Steady flow of electricity and lack of high speed internet still pose major problems for the rural population. When it comes to Online Education or rural population is not completely equipped with utilities like fast internet, uninterrupted power supply and electronic devices. There have been improvements regarding basic infrastructural facilities but many rural areas in India are still grappling with these challenges to make education completely digital or online.

Issues in Availability of Technological devices

While we look at the domain of digital learning, it is imperative to consider the availability of the right devices to every student for accessing digital content. Not a lot of people in rural India have access to personal laptops or computers, and phone screens are not conducive to long learning hours. Also, data packs and their costs can be a big deterrent both for teachers as well as learners, especially for live classes. Many students either don't have personal laptops/smart phones or they are available for a limited time. Hence, the learning remains restricted with the limited availability of technological devices.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of this study are: To analysis on issues and challenges of purchase of mobile phones by rural parents for online classes; To examine the need recognition of purchase of mobile phones; and To offer valid suggestions and recommendations.

Factors influencing purchase of mobile phone

In the purchase of mobile phones, there are many factors involve that have influence on consumer behavior. Behavior of consumer is a complex mixtures of so many factors such as social, culture, education, race, personality, environment and resources availability. The research intentionally focused to study about the purchase behaviour of parents at current situation. In the present situation, that is Covid -19 rural parents have no job and no regular income, during this situation parents are highly forced to manage the family as well as to fulfill the requirement of the family needs.

Need and importance of the study

The primary reason for this study is about, mobile phones are convenient to use at any time of the day in any location or situation. Mobile phones are considered as an important mode of communication. In their current state, they are viewed as the most convenient and accessible method to contact people. Conversely, although mobile phones are very beneficial to society and the everyday life of an individual there are a number of disadvantages to the use of mobile phones. There are many parts of a mobile phone that are unnecessary and do not add to the usefulness of the widget.

Research methodology:

Type of Research: This study was conducted to know the factors involved purchase of mobile phones during this current situation. This study was designed as fact finding research i.e., **Descriptive Research** method based on primary data.

Sample Size: To select the respondents, convenience sampling method was used and a total of 300 Respondents were contacted.

Sampling method: Simple Random Method

Type of questionnaire: Structured Questionnaire

Data Collection:

The questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data and further to analyze the data and how consumers behave against the importance of price, income, convenience, trust, loyalty when they purchase of mobile through online or nearest stores. The questionnaire was divided on demographics and other behavioral factors that are influenced with purchase.

Data Analysis:

Data analyses with percentage analysis and descriptive statistical tools were applied with SPSS for data analysis.

Area of the study: Thiruvallur district – 10 villages from 2 blocks Poonamalle and Ambatur.

Limitations of the study: sample size is only 300 respondents, convenience sampling methods is applied.

Data Analysis and Findings of the study

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	222	74%
Female	78	26%
Total	300	100
Age in years		
25- 35 years	81	27%
36-45 years	105	35%
46-55 years	45	15%
56- 65 years	45	15%
Above 66 years	24	08%
Total	300	100
Occupational status		
Self employed	33	11%
Agriculture labour	96	32%
Salaried- government	54	18%
Salaried - private	60	20%
Daily labour (coolie)	30	10%
Unemployed	27	9%
Total	300	100
Educational status		
No formal Education	30	10%
10 th standard	90	30%
12 th standard	60	20%
UG degree	66	22%
PG Degree	36	12%
professional	18	6%
Total	300	100
Size of the family members		

1-3 members	105	35%
4-5 members	120	40%
6 and above members	75	25%
Total	300	100
Monthly income of the family (Rs)		
Less than 7000	30	10%
7001 - 15000	63	21%
15001-30000	108	36%
30001- 40000	69	23%
Above 40000	30	10%
Total	300	100
House Type		
Own house	165	55%
Rental house	105	35%
Leased house	30	10%
Total	300	100

Source:
primary
data
Interpretations:
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The above table shows that 74 % of the respondents are male and 26% of the respondents are female. 2/3 rd of the respondents are male in the research area.

- Age: The above table indicates that 27% of the respondents comes under less than 25-35 years of age, 35% of the respondents belongs to 36-45 years, 15% each of the respondents are in the age group of 46-55 years and 56-65 years , only 8% of the of the respondents belongs to 66 years and above.
- Occupational status: It can be found from the occupational status of the respondents that 32% of the respondents are farmer and agriculture category, 20% of the employees in private sector work, 18% are employees in government services, , 11% are self employed, 10% of them working in daily labour work and only 9% of them unemployed category.
- Educational status: from the above table depicts that the educational status of the respondents 30% belong to 10th standard, 22% belongs to degree level qualification, 20% of them in the 12th standard, 12% of them post graduates degree, 10% of the no formal education and only 9% belong to professional qualification.
- Size of the family members: The above table clearly shows that 35% of the respondents are having 1-3 members in their family, 40% of the respondents are having 4-5 members in their family and 25% of the respondents are having above 6 members in their family.
- Family Income of the rural parents, it is observed from the above table shows that 10% of the respondent's family income is below Rs. 7000, 21% of the respondent's family income is Rs. 7001 to Rs. 15000, 36% of the respondent's family income is Rs. 15001 to Rs. 30000, 23% of the respondent's family income is Rs. 30001 to Rs. 40000, 10% of the respondent's family income is Rs. 40000 and above.

- From the table we understand that, house type of rural parents is that 55% of them having own house in different types, 35% of them belonging rental house and 10 % of the respondents living leased houses in the research area.

Table 2: Price Range of mobile phones (smart) in Rs.

Price Range of mobile phones (smart) in ₹	Frequency	Percentage
Price range between Rs.5000-7000	75	25%
Price range between Rs. 7000-9000	90	30%
Price range between Rs.9000-15000	66	22%
Price range between Rs. 15000-20000	39	13%
Above 20000	30	10%
Total	300	100

Source: primary data

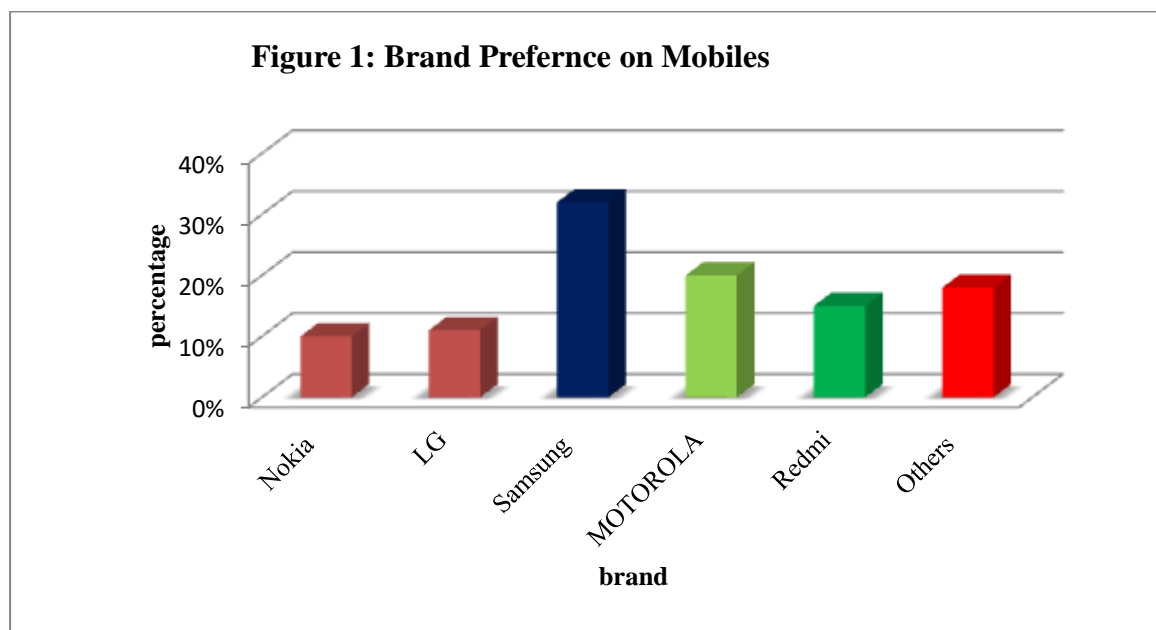
Interpretations

The above table shows that, the price range of mobile phones chosen by the rural parents for their children online class purpose, 30% of them decide to purchase price of mobiles between Rs.7000- 9000, 25% of their price range between Rs.5000-7000, 22% of the price range 9000-15000,13% of the respondents price between Rs.15000-20000 and only 10% of the respondent price range is above Rs. 20000.

Table 3: Brand Preferences on Mobile Phone Purchase by the Respondents

Brand preference on mobile phone	Frequency	Percentage
Nokia	30	10%
LG	33	11%
Samsung	96	32%
Motorola	60	20%
Redmi	45	15%
Others	54	18%
Total	300	100

Source: primary data

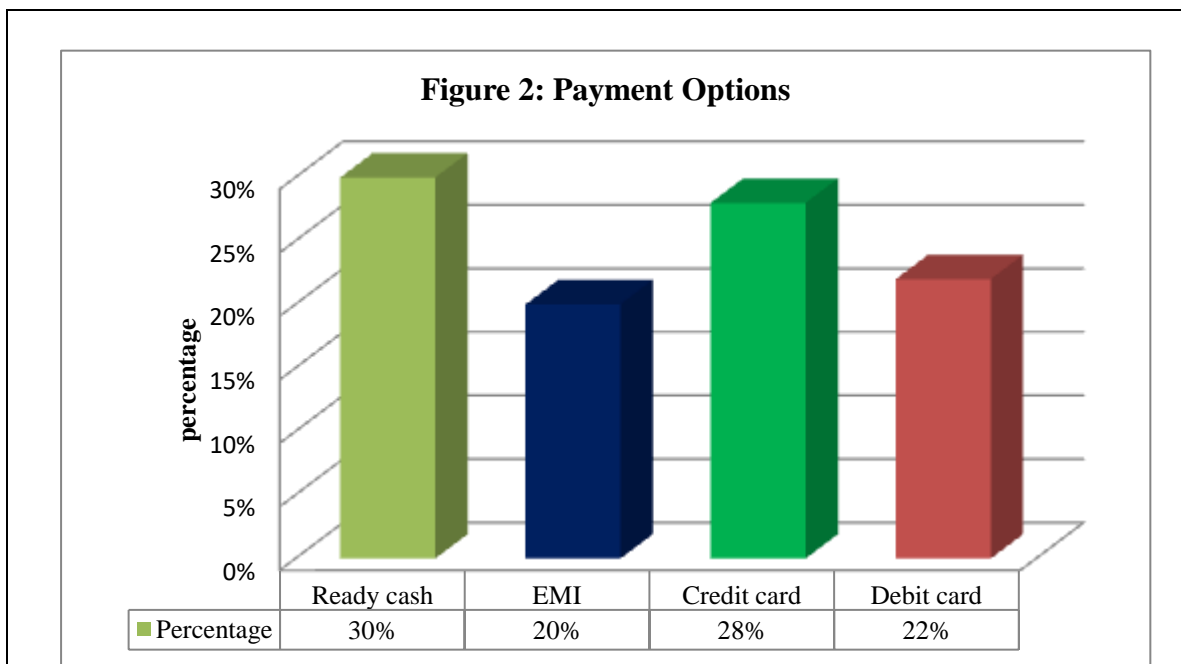


Interpretations: From the table we infer that, the brand preference mobiles selected by the respondents is, 32% of them have preferred Samsung mobiles, 20 % of them preferred Motorola mobiles, 15% of them chosen Redmi mobiles, 11% of the rural parents prefer LG mobiles, 10 % of them prefer Nokia mobile and 18% of them belongs to other category of mobile. They are not decided to buy particular brand mobiles.

Table 4: Payment option for purchase of mobile phones:

Payment options	Frequency	Percentage
Ready cash	90	30%
EMI	60	20%
Credit card	84	28%
Debit card	6	22%
Total	300	100

Source: primary data



Interpretations:

From the above table explain about payment options of rural parent purchase of mobile phones, 30% of their payment option is ready cash, 28% of the category belongs to credit card options, 22% of the parents using debit card payment method and 20% of them required EMI payment system.

INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS FACTORS IN THE NEED RECONGNITION OF MOBILE PHONES

Chi- Square Test:

H0: There is no significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their need recognition of mobile phones

Demographic Factors	NEED RECOGNITION OF MOBILE PHONE						Statistical Inference	
	More	%	Less	%	Total	%	Chi – square value	P Value
Gender								
Male	113	70.62	96	68.57	209	69.67	0.22	.879**
Female	47	29.38	44	31.43	91	30.33		
Total	160		140		300	100		
Age in years								
25- 35 years	32	20	26	19	58	19.33	0.736	0.821**
36-45 years	56	35	48	34	104	34.67		
46-55 years	48	30	45	32	93	31		

56- 65 years	16	10	18	13	34	11.33		
Above 66 years	8	5	3	2	11	3.67		
Total	160		140		300	100		
Occupational status								
Self employed	16	10	12	9	28	9.33	3.698	.0558**
business	19	12	15	11	34	11.33		
Salaried- government	24	15	20	14	44	14.67		
Salaried - private	61	38	49	35	110	36.67		
Daily labour (coolie)	35	22	30	21	65	21.67		
unemployed	5	3	14	10	19	6.33		
Total	160		140		300	100		
Educational status								
No formal Education	10	6	4	3	14	4.67	2.221	0.637**
10 th standard	24	15	21	15	45	15		
12 th standard	30	19	25	18	55	18.33		
UG degree	40	25	43	31	83	27.66		
PG Degree	35	22	35	25	70	23.33		
professional	21	13	12	8	33	11		
Total	160		140		300	100		
Size of the family members								
1-3 members	56	35	49	35	105	35	1.235	0.969**
4-5 members	64	40	56	40	120	140		
6 and above members	40	25	35	25	75	25		
Total	160		140		300	100		
Monthly income of the family (Rs)								
Less than 7000	40	25	30	21.42	70	23.33	2.226	0.819**
7000 - 15000	60	37.5	55	39.28	115	38.33		
15000-20000	26	16.25	22	15.71	48	16		
30000- 40000	24	15	20	14.28	44	14.67		
Above 40000	10	6.25	13	9.28	23	7.67		
Total	160		140		300	100		

*Significant ** Not significant

From the above chi- square table, it is observed that, there is no significant relationship between gender, age occupational status, educational qualification, size of the family members, income of the family (monthly) of the respondents and their need recognition for purchase of mobile phone. Hence hypothesis (H₀) is accepted. Further it is

observed that the need recognition of respondent purchase of mobile phones is more or less among the demographic factors.

Conclusion:

The research has identified that many issues and challenges of rural parents purchase of mobile for online education for their children. The objective of the research was to find out the underlying factors those have a role to determine the brands while customers purchase mobile phone. With the Covid-19 putting a halt on classroom learning sessions, online learning has paved a new way to retain normalcy for students and teachers. It is heartening to see that not only urban educational institutes, but the state-run schools in rural areas have also gone digital and resorted to online classes to avert academic losses. Rural parents is forced to purchase mobile phone with different conditions such as income loss, no job, arrangement of finance, decision regarding choosing mobile and pricing, lack of brand awareness and other physical attributes. Further it is observed that the need recognition of respondent purchase of mobile phones is more or less among the demographic factors. It is suggested that: in India has many rural and villages with lowest and poor infrastructure and technological and other facilities. Researcher strongly suggests that: the government to conduct necessary research and innovation at rural areas to develop and improve the technological infrastructure, internet, adequate electricity etc; and to provide necessary technological equipment to the rural people for accessing online education.

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