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Research Article

Impact of Psychic Distance on Global Brand Acceptance

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Brand management is the practice of managing all aspects of a brand from tangibles such as a logo and package design to the intangible tenor of the emotions a consumer experience when purchasing a brand, product or service. This study aims to find out the factors for selection of an international mobile brand and to study the role of psychic distance in explaining the reasons for loss of market share in the mobile segment in emerging markets like India. **Materials and Methods:** This study was conducted in Mumbai—a financial capital of India, an emerging market. About 150 respondents selected on a systematic basis participated in the study. A list of Samsung and Nokia users list are prepared with the help of mobile store owners. Six MBA students participated in the study for collecting the data after systematic selection. The questionnaire is filled after taking appointment. This study was conducted in the month of August, 2015. Emphasis is to add more Muslims so that a comparison of religion can be made as India has only 14.6% of Muslims. **Results:** Selection of a mobile brand as per present study is affected by three different variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance), culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance). Mental distance and cultural distance seem to play a role in the success of the Samsung as a brand in mobile segments when compared to Nokia. Religion also has variable responses and influences the selection of the brand. Females differ from males on acceptance of global brands in mobile segments. **Conclusion:** Three different factor variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance), culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) play a role in the selection of a mobile brand in emerging markets like India.

Key words: Global brands, mobile, psychic distance, emerging markets, brand acceptance

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Data Availability: All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files.

INTRODUCTION

Brand management is the practice of managing all aspects of a brand from tangibles such as a logo and package design to the intangible tenor of the emotions a consumer experience when purchasing a brand product or service Anonymous¹. In today's highly competitive marketplace, brand management has become one of the primary tools used by organizations to gain a sustained competitive advantage over rivals^{2,3}. Feeling bonded with and emotionally connected to, a brand emerged as an important aspect of brand love^{4,5}. This identity link occurred through both the consumer's direct relationship with brand's facilitation of interpersonal relationships⁶.

Research in consumer culture has provided important insights into the role brands play in consumer's everyday lives^{4,7,8}. Today, it is widely acknowledged that brands are not just differentiating marks that help consumers to choose one brand against another, but is also and indeed more significantly cultural signs that supply people with individual identities⁹ and collective identities through brand communities^{6,10}. Brands are co-constituted through a dialectical process between the consumer culture and the company's branding efforts¹¹⁻¹³. People across cultures are sometimes unable to communicate due to language differences. Often, understanding each other is possible when brand names, such as Coca Cola or Kleenex or Levi's or Beckham are uttered^{14,15}. The question arises as to whether the culture will favour those who care about brands or those who do not. An important aspect of consumer cultures is recognized to be that people desire a good not just because of the utilitarian value of the commodity, but also for its symbolic capacity, such as enabling the individual to express social status or to construct and maintain self identity. In this symbolic market the availability of branded goods is not a prerequisite for such processes to occur^{16,17}. Thus, similarity of culture of the people and the brand will increase the acceptability of the brand. This is one of the factors which determine the psychic distance which may influence the acceptance of the brand¹⁸. "Distance" which is based on perceived cultural differences between a home country and a foreign country, regardless of physical time and space factors, which differs across diverse cultures. Thus, psychic distance is defined as the distance between the home markets and foreign markets resulting from the perception and understanding of cultural and business differences¹⁸⁻²⁰. Nordstrom and Vahlne²¹ described psychical distance as factors preventing or disturbing the flow of information between potential or actual suppliers and customers. These

factors are associated with country-based diversities and dissimilarities and can be grouped into four clear areas: Linguistic differences and translation difficulty, cultural factors, societal norms, level of individualism or collectivism, values and customs, economic situation-existing trading links, infrastructure, local conditions, competition and investor confidence, political and legal system-government stability and risk of instability, import tariffs, legal protection and taxation levels. The cultural, administrative and political, geographical and economical (CAGE) framework is commonly used to analyze psychical distance when investigating international expansion opportunities^{18,20}.

Nokia who use to be the leader in emerging markets like India has started losing the market share to Samsung and Macromax (An an Indian brand) in the mobile segment. The possible explanation can be adaptability of new convenient faster technology. But, there can be other reasons as Nokis too adopted new technology too, but did not gain acceptance quickly. Is it due to psychic distance? This study responds to the many calls for an improvement in the understanding and operationalisation of psychic distance. It does so not only by holding to the original definition, but also by accounting for wider measures than the differences between the firm's home country and the target country. The role of psychic distance on acceptance of the foreign origin brand has not been studied. Will psychic distance influences their acceptance? There is a paucity of similar studies on the same where in psychic distance was measured and the correlation was made with brand success.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore the relationship of psychic distance on global brands accepted by the consumers. Impact of brand is well studied, but global brand's acceptances based on psychic distance in an emerging country like India is the focus area of this study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Many researchers have proposed that brand acceptance by consumers will depend upon the identity created by the organization. Kapferer²² suggested the dimensions like physique, personality, culture, self image reflection and relationship in his brand identity prism. Aaker²³ proposed the four aspects of a brand as product, organization, person and symbols for acceptance of the brand by consumers. De Chernatony²⁴ argued for the six components brand vision, culture, positioning, personality, relationship and presentation²⁵ and put forward the six dimensions, brand heritage, organizational capabilities, brand values, personality, vision and performance. Irrespective of the different

categorizations and labels, what they all share is the inclusion of organizational values; capabilities and behaviour as an important part of the brand identity. Consumers of mobile phones have different reasons for purchasing a brand. Some purchase the mobile phone for prestige, identity or sense of belongingness²⁶. However, all these researchers have not incorporated psychic distance of a brand as another factor in creating brand identity for better brand acceptance.

Role of psychic distance on brand identity acceptance of the consumer:

Psychic distance is arguable one of the most fundamental constructs within the field of international business. The concept of psychic distance in the literature has changed over time^{27,28} and “Factors preventing or disturbing the flow of information between the firm and target nations, including linguistic, institutional, cultural and political factors”. The PD as the degree/extent of the difference that the people from one culture perceive between themselves and the people of another culture^{20,29}. Psychic distance is operationalised in terms of both cultural and mental distances. Cultural distance is derived from Hofstede³⁰ dimensions of national culture. Psychic distance causes communication problems, which in turn increases costs and the risks of making a mistake while entering into a country. Thus; one would expect a lower level of performance in more psychically distant markets. However, several researchers^{27,31} have argued that low levels of psychic distance may cause overconfidence, which may also adversely affect performance. Very little effort had been put into developing a superior method for measuring such an important but obviously complex construct. The vast majority of researchers have chosen to employ the Hofstede index³², despite a long history of ambiguous and weak results³²⁻³⁵. Despite broad agreement that psychic distance is a multidimensional construct including (or influenced by) factors such as differences in language, religion, culture, education, industrial development and political systems^{27,32,36,37}. However, religion, gender, mental distance measured in terms of customer satisfaction, ease of payment, influence of salesman are missing in earlier studies. These factors could influence the acceptance of global brands.

It is evident that psychic distance refers to the perceived degree of similarity or difference between the home and foreign market³⁸. However, psychic distance in terms of mental distance is not studied by the same researchers.

Gap analysis and identification of variables: This study explores the relationship of psychic distance of brand accepted by the consumers. There is a paucity of study on

brand acceptance based on psychic distance. Impact of global brand is well studied, but global brand's acceptances based on psychic distance in a country are not studied. Therefore, it is identified as areas of study due to gap analysis. Moreover; study on acceptance a global brand which used to be the number one brand, but not now is not studied. Psychic distance measured in terms of mental distance like ease of payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to the salesman and cultural distance like similarity of culture and country image are considered as moderating variables for the current study. The other variables taken up for study are religion, gender and education. Independent variables are quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance considered as technology factors.

Psychic distance between host and home countries may have positively correlated as per studies of Evans and Mavondo²⁷, Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul³⁹, Lee⁴⁰ and Uddin *et al.*⁴¹. However, role of psychic distance in global brand's acceptance has not been studied, though some factors like education, culture, language, country of origin have been studied individually but not using psychic distance as a measurement tool to assess the brand's acceptance. Moreover, these factors, not studied on global brand's acceptance, especially in emerging markets like India. Thus, based on literature review and gap analysis the variables identified are technological factors, cultural distance and mental distance. These variables are used to develop the theoretical construct.

Developing theoretical construct: The theoretical framework based on quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology factors) with other variables like culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) and due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance) are incorporated in the development of a theoretical framework. These factors are selected on the basis of literature review and work done by Dow and Karunaratna³⁶, Srivastava and Anderson³⁸, Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul³⁹ and Brewer⁴². Figure 1 gives the theoretical construct by incorporating these variables to explain the acceptance of global brands.

The theoretical construct is based on assumption that technological factors are the independent variables and is moderated by mental distance and cultural factors-a part of psychic distance. Demographic variables like religion, education and gender are also taken as moderating variables in our construct. Based on this construct the following hypotheses are developed.

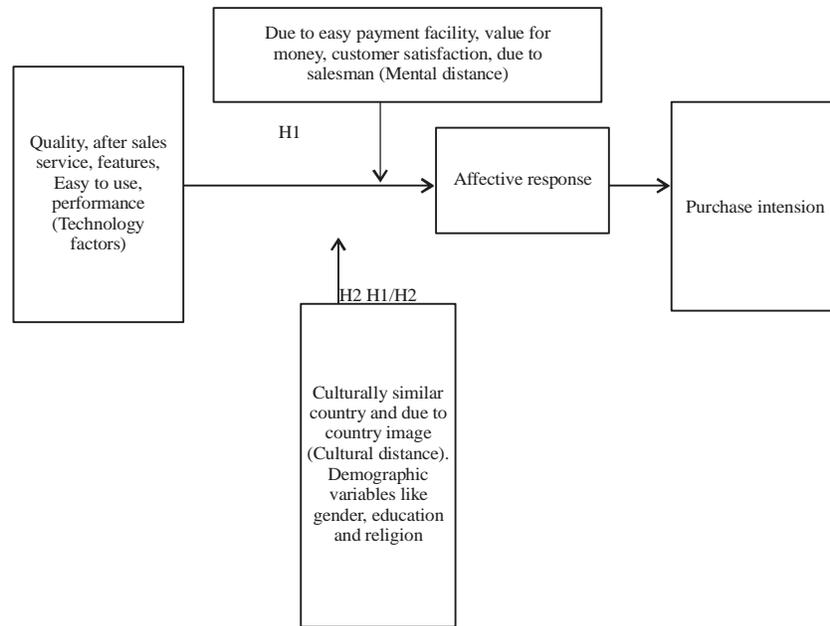


Fig. 1: Factors affecting mobile purchase of Samsung and Nokia brands

Objectives: The study aims to find out the factors for selection of a mobile brand in emerging markets like India. It also tries to study the reasons for a brand to lose out the market share. The third aim is to study the role of psychic distance which includes mental distance, cultural distance and physical distance in explaining the reasons for loss of market share in the mobile segment in emerging markets.

Developing hypotheses: The proposed hypothesis is based on the premises that technological factors like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance of the mobile affect the purchase of mobile. However; there are other factors like mental distance consisting of due to ease of payment, value for money, customer satisfaction and due to friendly, helpful salesman creating a positive mental attitude towards a brand acceptance and thus reducing mental distance. Short mental distance creates liking for the brand³⁸. Mental distance or psychic distance has been reported to influence the country selection while considering entry mode^{36,38,39,42}. These factors affect the dependent variables like purchase intention and selection of a mobile set. Therefore, following hypothesis based on these factors is proposed: H1: Mental distance like due to easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman as a moderating variable along with independent variables which are technology factors like quality perception, after sales service, features, easy to use, influences dependent variable the selection of a mobile and purchase intentions.

However, culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) may also affect the decision as it also acts as moderating variables on selection of a brand in mobile section. Cultural distance plays a role^{27,39,43}. Similarly, the difference in education level was reported by Dow and Karunaratna³⁶ and Brewer⁴². Even religion was reported by Dow and Karunaratna³⁶. Therefore, the second hypothesis are proposed as under:

H2: Cultural distance like culturally similar country, country image along with demographic variables like gender, education and religion as a moderating variable along with independent variables which are technology factors like quality perception, after sales service, features, easy to use, influences dependent variable the selection of a mobile (response) and purchase intentions.

Thus, technology if not blended with cultural distance may not attract enough adaptation of technology. Therefore, it is also important and may influence by these moderating variables.

Thus, the hypothesis take care of variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology factors) with other variables like culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) and due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance) which are incorporated in the theoretical framework.

Methodology

Research design: This study was conducted in Mumbai-a financial capital of India-an emerging market. About 150 respondents selected on a systematic basis participated in the study. A list of Samsung and Nokia users list are prepared with the help of mobile store owners. Six MBA students participated in the study for collecting the data after systematic selection. The questionnaire is filled after taking appointment. This study was conducted in the month of August, 2015. Emphasis is to add more Muslims so that a comparison of religion can be made as India has only 14.6% of Muslims⁴⁴.

Sample design: Total 150 respondents participated in this study. Respondents are selected first on random basis and then clubbed into two categories-Samsung users and Nokia users. Their contact numbers are noted and systematic sampling procedure is adopted by selecting every third respondent to participate in the study from these two categories. Focus is on Nokia and Samsung users as Samsung is the leader and Nokia use to be the leader earlier in mobile segment in emerging markets like India. The demographic profile is given in Table 1.

About 50 respondents participated in the study with SD-0416 majority of of the respondent are graduate and postgraduate (85%) with SD 0.701. Religion wise in our sample size Muslims are comparable to Hindu though the Muslim population in India is 14.6% of India’s population. Thus a religion study may be more reliable due to good ratio (0.8/1). The average age of respondents is 32.06

with SD-10.397. Sample is adequate as per KMO and Bartlett’s test which is given in Table 2.

Questionnaire design: The questionnaire is developed based on variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to the easy payment facility, value for money (Mental distance), customer satisfaction, culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance). The moderating variables built in the questionnaire are friends/family/relatives using it, Salesperson, recommendation of friends and associates. The entire Cronbach alpha co-efficient of the dimensions as well as the scale used to measure are above the generally accepted cutoff⁴¹ value of 0.7. Reliability results are quality (0.704), after sales service (0.630), easy payment facility (0.789) and value for money (0.713), customer satisfaction (0.719), culturally similar country (0.699) and due to country image (0.828). Education, gender and religion as demographic variables for study. Religious affiliation is measured by asking respondents about their religion. Such approach for measuring religious affiliation is the approach deemed most appropriate by cross-cultural behavioural researchers and especially those in cultural anthropology and sub-cultural psychology as per study of Hirschman⁴⁵ and Uddin *et al.*⁴¹.

Data analysis: The data analysed using SPSS for inference of the data as these tests like regression, Karl Pearson’s correlation coefficient and factor analysis, rank test could give enough data.

Ethical consideration: Each respondent asked for his permission before taking the interview on his/her experience after showing the questionnaire forms and I-card of the student.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic variable analysis: Our first analysis is to study the effect of demographic variables (Table 2-5) like gender, education and religion on three different factors, variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance), culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) for reasons for buying a mobile phone.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Category	N	Standard deviation
Gender	150	0.416
Males	117	
Females	33	
Education	150	0.701
Undergraduates	38	
Graduates	64	
Postgraduates	48	
Religion	150	0.534
Hindu	70	
Muslim	78	
Buddhist	2	

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett’s test

Tests	Df
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	0.709
Bartlett’s test of sphericity	29.899
Approximately chi-square	55.000
Significant	0.000

Df: Degree of freedom

Table 3: Reasons for selecting mobile sets-gender analysis (N = 150)

Parameters (Scale 1-5)	Overall (N = 150)		Males (N = 117)		Females (N = 33)	
	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Quality	5.64	1.417	5.49	1.468	6.33	0.767
Performance	5.45	1.163	5.46	1.056	5.83	1.383
After sales service	4.71	1.837	4.60	1.768	5.33	2.275
Value for money	5.64	1.383	5.60	1.384	6.33	0.767
Features	5.69	1.359	5.60	1.445	6.33	0.485
Easy to use	5.45	1.742	5.43	1.818	6.00	0.840
Customer satisfaction	5.50	1.474	5.49	1.507	5.83	1.249
Culturally similar country	4.02	1.526	4.00	1.500	4.67	1.138
Due to country image	3.74	1.740	3.83	1.723	3.67	1.645
Due to salesman	2.95	1.609	3.09	1.618	2.33	1.534
Due to easy payment facility	3.71	2.127	3.66	2.079	4.17	2.550

Table 4: Reasons for selecting mobile sets due to education (Scale 1-5)

Parameters (Scale 1-5)	Overall (N = 150)		Undergraduates (N = 38)		Graduates (N = 64)		Post graduates (N = 48)	
	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Quality	5.64	1.417	5.80	1.656	5.13	1.687	5.69	1.080
Performance	5.45	1.163	5.60	1.056	5.40	1.095	5.38	0.847
After sales service	4.71	1.837	4.60	0.828	4.33	2.205	4.69	1.704
Value for money	5.64	1.383	5.20	1.014	5.33	1.679	5.92	1.085
Features	5.69	1.359	5.80	1.014	5.60	1.421	5.38	1.616
Easy to use	5.45	1.742	6.40	1.242	5.40	1.876	5.00	1.864
Customer satisfaction	5.50	1.474	6.00	1.309	5.60	1.514	5.08	1.511
Culturally similar country	4.02	1.526	5.20	1.373	4.13	0.726	3.38	1.928
Due to country image	3.74	1.740	3.80	1.373	4.60	1.321	3.00	1.987
Due to salesman	2.95	1.609	4.00	1.604	4.07	1.304	1.85	0.961
Due to easy payment facility	3.71	2.127	5.60	2.028	4.47	1.804	2.23	1.441

Table 5: Reasons for selecting mobile sets religion analysis

Parameters	Overall (N = 150)		Hindu (N = 70)		Muslim (N = 78)	
	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Quality	5.64	1.417	5.53	1.804	5.68	1.152
Performance	5.45	1.163	5.47	1.375	5.41	0.894
After sales service	4.71	1.837	5.07	1.452	4.36	1.982
Value for money	5.64	1.383	5.60	1.601	5.50	1.280
Features	5.69	1.359	6.00	1.382	5.59	0.992
Easy to use	5.45	1.742	5.67	1.942	5.55	1.541
Customer satisfaction	5.50	1.474	5.87	1.604	5.23	1.322
Culturally similar country	4.02	1.526	4.53	1.471	3.64	1.595
Due to country image	3.74	1.740	4.20	1.342	3.36	1.886
Due to salesman	2.95	1.609	3.53	1.766	2.77	1.455
Due to easy payment facility	3.71	2.127	4.20	2.341	3.32	2.001

Table 6: Factor analysis of the reasons to purchase

Factors for selecting mobile	Overall	Hindu (N = 70)	Muslim (N = 78)
Quality	0.704	0.862	0.908
Performance	0.630	0.768	0.608
After sales service	0.494	0.658	0.419
Value for money	0.488	0.145	0.680
Features	0.439	0.699	0.654
Easy to use	0.495	0.748	0.647
Customer satisfaction	0.789	0.734	0.769
Culturally similar country	0.713	0.557	0.829
Due to country image	0.719	0.667	0.842
Due to salesman	0.699	0.840	0.688
Due to easy payment facility	0.828	0.692	0.767

Brands analysis based on demographic variables: The second part of the analysis is pertaining to Samsung and Nokia brands (Table 6-8).

The three main factors (technology, mental distance, cultural distance) and subfactors results are given in Table 3 in our first part of the analysis.

This study indicates that features (z-5.5), quality (z-4.5), value for money (z-4.018), easy to use (z-2.4), due to salesman (2.5) have a significant difference between males and females and are more important to females compared to

Table 7: Reasons for selecting mobile sets-Nokia vs Samsung

Parameters	Nokia (N = 78)			Samsung (N = 72)		
	Mean score	Standard deviation	Factor value	Mean score	Standard deviation	Factor value
Quality	5.29	1.758	0.828	5.90	0.928	0.865
Performance	5.65	1.036	0.830	5.33	1.257	0.583
After sales service	5.29	1.689	0.768	4.24	1.729	0.524
Value for money	5.76	1.570	0.711	5.52	1.148	0.757
Features	5.18	1.740	0.840	5.90	0.875	0.760
Easy to use	5.24	1.976	0.908	5.67	1.295	0.618
Customer satisfaction	5.35	1.293	0.721	5.57	1.445	0.820
Culturally similar country	3.94	1.223	0.651	4.00	1.787	0.827
Due to country image	3.76	1.945	0.817	3.81	1.605	0.837
Due to salesman	2.76	1.644	0.896	3.19	1.544	0.706
Due to easy payment facility	3.00	1.697	0.803	4.48	2.278	0.739

Table 8: Analysis of loyalty-recommending the same brand top others

Brand	Samsung	Nokia		
Samsung	54	3		
Nokia	33	18		
Chi square test	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2 tailed test)	
Pearson chi square test	105.816	15	0.000	
Likelihood ratio	68.914	15	0000	
By linear association	14.707	1	0.000	
No of valid cases	150.000			

males. Customer satisfaction, performance, after sale service, cultural similarity and country image are other important overall factors, which influence the selection of mobile (H2). Differences in the social behaviours of men and women may be the result of culturally transmitted roles^{38,46}. Therefore, the expectation will vary in gender analysis. Earlier study of Srivastava and Anderson³⁸ also reported a gender variation. Thus, the psychic distance on brand selection may play also, greater role in females compared to males. It may be due to right brains domination among females than males. This also explains the differences observed between male and female on mobile selection factors. Eastern culture being a collective culture in nature may be able to explain this variation. Features is a more important factor for females when compared to males in this study. This could be the explanation for the report, which states, females tended to use cell phones/text messaging and online social sites more so than did males⁴⁷. In case of choosing mobile phone brands, mostly considered factors, by customers include physical attributes, pricing, charging and operating facilities, size and weight, friend's and colleague's recommendations, neighbour's recommendations and advertising¹⁵. Do educated people have different criteria for selection of a mobile phone? The second part of the study is the measure the effect of Education on the role of mobile selection. Table 4 gives data on reasons for selection of mobile sets affected by education.

The mobile phone has diverse usages to different users in accordance with their necessities. With dramatic increase in

mobile phone usage in recent years, people take into account various factors while they decide to purchase a mobile phone⁴⁸.

This study reported that there is variation in parameters like quality (z-2.0) between graduate and postgraduate however, the undergraduate and graduate the difference is not significant (z-1.1). Value for money once again is more important for postgraduate level compared to graduate level (z-2.1). However, there is no difference between graduate and undergraduate (z-1.3). Observed variables due to education between undergraduates and postgraduates regarding features (z-2.0) are noticed. Postgraduates gets more influenced by features compared to undergraduates. This may be due to higher expectations from undergraduates for ease of use than graduate (z-5.0) and postgraduate (z-5.5).

Global brand acceptance due to psychic distance:

Acceptance of mobile due to the culturally similar country has had greater influence on undergraduates than graduates (z-5.2) and postgraduate (z-3.2). This confirms our hypothesis-H2. Cultural characteristics also influence shopping patterns^{49,50}. Consumer buying is influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics⁵¹. Image plays an important role in the selection of a brand⁸. Country image does influence the purchase of mobile and is affected by education. Education variation has been observed between graduates and postgraduates regarding the country image (z-7.8). Other factors like payment facility has variation

between undergraduate and graduate (z-5.2), graduate and postgraduate (z-11.5) and undergraduate and postgraduate (z-15.2). Undergraduate will get influenced by payment facility more compared to graduate and postgraduate. This could be due lower earning by them. Education also affects other factors like customer satisfaction (z-4.6) due to salesman (z-10.4). This confirms hypothesis-H1 and H2. Respondents strongly agreed that their level of education would influence the type of mobile phone they buy or use²⁶. Hui and Wan⁵² mentioned factors such as time spent on the internet, the usage of internet at work and the level of education affect individual exposure.

Although, culture and subcultural norms have been subjected to increased scrutiny in recent years as explanatory constructs for various dimensions of consumer behavior, religion as an element of culture has received only slight attention in the marketing literature⁵³. As per study of Agyeman²⁶ religion and language were not very important factors influencing the purchase of mobile phone and due to that the respondents were not ready to accept any rules from religious authority pertaining to the type of mobile phone they will buy. Three shopping orientation factors, namely price conscious, quality conscious and impulsive shopping were found in the present study to be consistently related to religiosity⁵⁴. Therefore, the next part of the study is to analyze the impact of religion on consumer behavior.

Religion and global brand acceptance based on psychic distance:

Present study tries to analyze parameters important for selecting a mobile moderated by variables like religion (Table 4). This study is confined to two major religions of India-Hindu and Muslim. Muslim religion is the second largest population in India-an emerging market which also has the second largest population of the same religion in the world after Indonesia. Religion analysis on selection of mobile sets of different parameters are given in Table 5.

Religion variation is observed between Hindu and Muslims. Variation is on after sales service (z-2.5) customer satisfaction (z-3.0), culturally similar (z-4.0), due to salesman (z-3.5) country image (4.1), ease of payment (z-3.8). Hindus get more influenced by these factors compared to Muslims (H2). Therefore, among technology, mental distance, cultural distance factor Hindus get influenced more by mental distance (due to the easy payment facility, due to salesman) and cultural distance factor (country image and culturally similar) while selecting a mobile set compared to Muslim. Essoo and Dibb⁵⁵ conducted a similar study in mauritius involving Hindu, Muslim and Catholic consumers. The results confirmed that consumers having different level of religiosity

differ notably in their shopping behaviour. In particular, devout Hindus were found to differ from their casually religious counterparts in four shopper types: The demanding, practical, thoughtful and innovative shopper. In the case of Muslim consumers, their findings suggest that there is no difference in consumer shopping behaviour among devout and casually religious Muslim consumers, except for the trendy shopper type. Devout Catholics were found to differ from their casually religious counterparts in four types of shopper: The demanding, practical, trendy and innovative. This study did not measure the influence of religiosity.

The variation in observation may be due to an asymmetry in how Hindus and Muslims respond to religious cues as reported by Srivastava and Anderson³⁸, Brass⁵⁶ and Baker *et al.*⁵⁷. Ethnic, cultural and religious divisions are often thought to cause conflicts⁵⁸. Marketing of mobile sets has to consider this interesting observation as the Muslim population in India is very high in the world. Factor analysis in general and religion being focused area of study reveals the following as given in Table 6.

Factors like quality, performance, customer satisfaction, culturally similar, country image, due to the salesman and ease of payment facility are the important factors to influence the purchase of mobile in general. However, there are differences between Hindus and Muslims on factors affecting the brand choice.

Brand acceptance based on psychic distance:

The second part of the study is to compare the two global mobile brands-Samsung and Nokia in emerging markets like India. Nokia is to be the number one brand but dethroned recently by Samsung (Table 6-9). The study took the same factors to

Table 9: Extraction method principal component analysis. Factor analysis for buying motives-gender analysis of two brands

Religion	Brand			
	Samsung		Nokia	
	Males (62)	Females (10)*	Males (56)	Females (22)
Factors	----- Extraction -----			
Quality	0.816		0.799	1.000
Performance	0.839		0.831	0.984
After sales service	0.751		0.831	0.915
Value for money	0.884		0.924	1.000
Features	0.841		0.848	0.978
Easy to use	0.904		0.621	0.915
Customer satisfaction	0.776		0.846	0.978
Culturally similar country	0.796		0.861	0.921
Due to country image	0.863		0.805	0.921
Due to salesman	0.890		0.832	0.711
Due to easy payment facility	0.812		0.828	0.998

*For Samsung female very few cases for analysis

see if there is a difference between Samsung-No. 1. Brand and Nokia which used to be No. 1. Brand for a long time in India-an emerging market. Table 7 gives an analysis of these factors.

Samsung scores over Nokia on factors like quality (z-2.5), features (Mean scores-5.90; z-3.1), easy to use (Mean scores 5.67), customer satisfaction (Mean scores 5.57), culturally similar (Mean score 4.00), due to country image (Mean score 3.81), due to salesman (Mean scores 3.19; z-3.5) and easy payment facility (Mean score 4.48; z-7.1). Nokia scored over Samsung on after sales service (Mean score 5.29; z-3.5), value for money (Mean score 5.76). Nokia has lost on many accounts when compared to Samsung. This may be the reasons for Nokia to lose market share to Samsung.

Factor analysis reveals that quality, performance, after sales service, value for money, features, easy to use, customer satisfaction, due to country image, due to the salesman and easy payment facility are the important factors for buying Nokia. However, for Samsung these factors are quality, value for money, features, customer satisfaction, culturally similar country, due to country image, due to salesman and easy payment facility. Thus, Samsung on factor analysis scores over Nokia on culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) from Nokia.

Therefore, on three different factors, variables like quality factor, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance), culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) variation are observed between Nokia and Samsung. Mental distance and cultural distance seems to play a role in the success of the Samsung as a brand brand (H1 and H2). Psychic distance has a role to play on brand acceptance besides technology factors.

A further analysis using factor analysis of two brands based on the above parameters, but taking religion reveals that for Muslim customers quality (0.900), performance (0.974), features (0.928) and salesman (0.935) influence emerged strong factors for choosing Samsung. Muslims choose Nokia due to value for money (0.945), easy to use (0.919), features (0.981) and due to country image (0.904). Hindu respondents, who choose a Nokia, value for money (0.965), features (0.927), culturally similar country (0.914) and salesman's influence (0.923) are the main factors for choosing the brand.

Thus, a satisfied customer may recommend the brand to others. Customer satisfaction, the key for growth and survival is taken for further analysis. It is expected that a satisfied customer will have more loyalty¹⁵. Measurement of loyalty due to customer satisfaction among the users of Samsung

and Nokia is done, in the present study, by asking the respondent on their recommendation behaviour to friends, (Table 8).

Number of respondents recommending Samsung among Samsung users are significantly higher compared to Nokia. This could be due to higher satisfaction level among Samsung users compared to Nokia. Mental distance and cultural distance seem to play a role in improving the comfort level of the respondents (H1 and H2). Psychic distance causes communication problems, which in turn increases costs and the risks of making a mistake. Thus, one would expect a lower level of performance in more psychically distant markets³⁸. Due to the mental and cultural proximity added with technological factors, it is possible to have influence on the consumer satisfaction. A high degree of satisfaction due to multiple factors created such situations.

Country of origin creates a better image depending upon the consumer psyche of understanding of that country. Awareness of the origin of a brand is important in this study as both Samsung and Nokia never highlighted their country of origin in their campaign, but many consumers may be aware. Therefore, awareness on country of origin creates a better image among the consumers. Country of origin (COO) effect on consumer attitudes toward purchases from different countries has long been recognized in the literature^{15,35}. In this study 69.52 and 58.33% of the respondents are aware of country of origin for Samsung and Nokia, respectively with $r = 0.575$ (significant 0.000). Higher the awareness of country of origin, greater is the closeness of the brand in the mind of consumers as he carries certain image of a country. Thus, this helps in reducing the psychic distance between a brand and consumer. It is a well-known fact that brand awareness or familiarity and brand choice are highly correlated⁵⁷. Familiarity reflects consumer's ability in recognizing particular brand and associating the brand with the product category based on his/her experience both directly and indirectly⁵⁹. Reduction in the psychic distance helped Samsung to gain mileage in India (H1).

A further analysis of factors affecting choice by using factor analysis for finding out the gender difference between Samsung and Nokia reveals that for Samsung males, easy to use emerged as a strong factor. For Nokia males, value for money is the strongest factor for choosing Nokia. For female choosing Nokia, value for money is a very strong factor for choosing Nokia. Table 9 has given the same data.

Masculinity and femininity are personality traits relevant to brands may help in explaining the observation from the present study. However, their measurement and contribution to branding theory and practice using masculinity and femininity have not been examined⁶⁰. According to

Mitchell and Walsh⁶¹, males and females want different products and they are likely to have different ways of liking and obtaining these. This may be the reasons for gender variations.

Samsung in their marketing promotion of the mobile brands highlighted mental distance factors besides highlighting technological advantage. Reduction in the psychic distance increased brand familiarity. Familiarity helped the consumer to recognize a particular brand and associating with the same brand⁵⁹. This helped the Samsung brand to reduce the psychic distance compared to Nokia as they have also television in India. Mental and cultural proximity added with technological factors helped Samsung to create better consumer satisfaction. Therefore, based on the above results it is possible to explain the same through the following formula:

$$\text{Global Brand Acceptance (GBA)} = \sum \text{Md} + \text{cd} + \text{ta} + \text{dv}$$

where, Md is mental distance cd is cultural distance, technological advantage and dv is demographic variables.

It is quite possible due to automatism as brand familiarity due to mental distance and cultural distance brings a behaviour which triggers cognitive mysteries based on more proximity of these two factors. It is possible due to sense perception activated by these two factors that one can attain through the process of concept formation and inductive logic. Metal distance and cultural distance are part of psychic distance. Religion is added as a part of mental distance and has an influence on culture. Religion has a role in the behaviour of an individual. Similarly, gender does have different level of acceptance of these two global mobile brands. This is in conformity with earlier studies of Srivastava and Anderson³⁸.

If mental distance and cultural distance are not reduced technological advantage may not give them an edge when there is a multiple choice. Nokia failed in this aspect even though they tried their best to introduce android based mobile but their success is limited. One may say that they lost the first mover advantage, but being once a leader always has strong customer loyalty. It did not help them to regain market share in spite of aggressive marketing. It may be due to the lower psychic distance of Samsung compared to Nokia.

Psychic distance and cultural distance are two concepts interchangeably with no clear distinction between them³⁸. Therefore, it will be apt to add them together. Cultural distance and psychic distance are two concepts that are widely used in the marketing literature to assess the differences between countries. However; there is a paucity of study on brand acceptance.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Three different factor variables like quality, after sales service, features, easy to use, performance (Technology), due to the easy payment facility, value for money, customer satisfaction, due to salesman (Mental distance), culturally similar country and due to country image (Cultural distance) play a role in the selection of a mobile brand in emerging markets like India. According to the present study, mental distance and cultural distance seem to play a role in the success of the Samsung as a brand when compared to Nokia besides technology factors. The present study explains the reasons for a number one brand to be replaced by a new brand in emerging markets like India by studying factors like the psychic distance of a brand. The nearer is the brand psychologically, greater will be the acceptance and purchase behaviour. Demographic variables like gender; religion variation is noticed in terms of purchase intentions of these brands. Religion variation is observed between Hindu and Muslims. There is a difference among Muslims and Hindus, females and males and education on the selection criteria of Nokia and Samsung. Hindus get influenced more by mental distance (due to the easy payment facility and due to salesman) and cultural distance factor (country image and culturally similar) while selecting a mobile set compared to Muslim. Samsung scores over Nokia on culture and mental factors besides technology to emerge as the number one brand, replacing Nokia in emerging markets like India.

Validation of the theoretical construct explains the phenomenon, but a structural equation may give still more precise results. Theoretical rigour is missing due to lack of earlier studies on the same subjects by others. Physical distance is not considered in this study as it is felt that it is more important for international entry mode study but not for global brand's acceptance.

This study will be useful to managers in building a better communication to bridge the gap of psychic distance by reducing the mental distance and cultural distance factors. Mobile marketers should never neglect technological advantage while marketing brands in mobile segments. Demographic variable like religion, gender and education of a market should be considered carefully while marketing a global mobile brand in emerging markets. This study will help the mobile brands to segment their approach better. Segmentation based on religion is an interesting approach in a country dominated by multiple religions. This is important for a market, which has multiple religion followers.

Understanding of psychic distance specially, mental distance and cultural distance will play a role in the selection of a mobile brand.

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS

This study investigates the effect of psychic distance on brand selection in emerging markets like India. This study provides empirical evidence concerning religion's influence on consumer behaviour in a non-Western culture. This study contributes to the current literature as the first piece of empirical endeavour to probe the relationship between religion and consumer behaviour in a totally different cultural framework. Application of psychic distance on brand acceptance is not studied, especially in emerging markets, which are the destination for global brands. This study adds value to the knowledge. Religion and its role in brand acceptance is another interesting contribution of the study. The study will be useful for marketers to segment their brands accordingly.

This study investigates the effect of psychic distance on brand selection in emerging markets like India. It also tries to explain the reasons for a brand to slip to number two brands by giving additional reasons for the same. This study provides empirical evidence concerning religion's influence on consumer behaviour in a non-Western culture. A review of relevant literature showed that the majority of past studies addressing the linkage between these two constructs have been typically conducted with Western Judeo-Christian cultures where Jews, Protestants and Catholics are predominant in its society; other countries with different socio-cultural milieus are underrepresented in research investigating this issue. This study contributes to the current literature as the first piece of empirical endeavour to probe the relationship between religion and consumer behaviour in a totally different cultural framework. Application of psychic distance on brand acceptance is not studied, especially in emerging markets, which are the destination for global brands. This study adds value to the knowledge. Religion and its role in brand acceptance is another interesting contribution of the study. The study will be useful for marketers to segment their brands accordingly.

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