



MAPPING OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS FOR LAPTOPS: A CASE STUDY

Dr. Reeta Arora*

Dr. Asha Chawla**

Abstract

Purpose: The introduction of computer technology has transformed the lives of the humanity in general with the speed, quality and density with which the information is being transferred, retrieved and stored resulting in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness. In the new era of technology advancement, the laptop manufacturing companies are introducing various new features in their brands. All these put pressure on the ordinary consumers and make it complex and confusing decisions as to what to purchase and how to purchase. Therefore, the present study aims at ascertaining the laptop consumer's preference over the various counts of laptop brands they use. The study also throws light on the consumers' perceptions with respect to laptops.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The data were collected using a structured questionnaire-based survey. A total of 110 respondents was considered for the study. Chi-square test, weighted average score method, Kendall's coefficient of concordance test and cross tabulation were used to analyze the data.

Findings: Majority of consumers preferred to purchase a brand of their own choice from local dealers and showrooms after going through information available from reference groups like friends, relatives, dealers etc. Features of laptops were considered the most important factor while purchasing laptop. Overall, laptop features had been ranked 1 followed by the price as far as satisfaction level regarding laptop. A large number of consumers were brand loyal regarding new purchase of laptop but a majority of consumers were in favor of moving to new brand for their future purchase of a laptop.

Practical Utility: This study may provide the laptop companies with a launch pad and acts as a guide that can help the same in chalking out strategies to enlarge the market share and also enhance the level of awareness among customers. It may also help them to gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

Keywords: Consumer perception, Laptops, Brand, Product features, Laptop dealers.

*Assistant Professor in Commerce, Govt. P.G. College For Women, Karnal, Haryana.

**Associate Professor in Commerce, G.V.M. Girls College, Sonapat, Haryana.



INTRODUCTION

The introduction of computer technology has transformed the lives of the humanity in general with the speed, quality and density with which the information is being transferred, retrieved and stored resulting in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness. Mobile computing has become highly popular in the last decade, and advances in computer and mobile device technology allow users to meet their computing needs from every place at any time. Following the success of desktop computers, laptop computers have become highly popular as portable versions of desktops with the full functionality of desktop computing and the portability that allows users to carry them anywhere. A laptop is a personal computer designed for mobile use and is small and light enough to sit on a personal' lap while in use. Today, a bundle of brands is available with several options such as lower price, higher quality, better performance and world-class services along with the power efficiency, touch screen functions, etc. and various companies are coming with various attractive promotional schemes with added features to their laptops. Apart from the rapidly falling prices of laptops and new technologies being packed into an ultra-slick laptops, the entry of non-traditional players to develop wireless infrastructure has given the market a further boost. For instance, a few years ago, wireless connectivity in the laptop was considered to be a luxury, but today, it has become a necessity with major hospitality chains in India establishing wireless hotspots. The spurt in laptop usage can also be attributed to the increasing usage of IT and many businesses have started encouraging their employees to work from home. Today, even companies are giving laptops to their executives and employees in a bid to boost productivity. In order to further encourage users, many of the corporations are offering easy finance and insurance schemes as well. While other sectors like hospitality, civil aviation, health care sector, to mention a few, witnessed faster computerization. On the other hand, education sector, though slower initially is caught up with the trend and today there is an emphasis on students owning/using their laptops in their various programs for presentations, project work with colleges/universities providing Wi-Fi facility has added to the usage of laptops by faculties as well as students. This eventually resulted in increased usage of computer technology in classroom teaching and learning process.



The laptop is a high value/high involvement product. It involves the target consumer's interpretation of the product features, price, services, promotional offers, warranty/guarantee, usage, benefits and also about the manufacturing organization for the consumer. Therefore, the first and the foremost challenge facing the manufacturers are to consolidate the all factors regarding laptops in the minds of the consumers. This calls for increasing the value proposition and excitement of the brand by incorporating newer and newer features in the laptops. A laptop being a technology product, consumers look forward to helping, caring, knowledgeable and confidence inspiring employees who can help the consumers in taking a right buying decision. To survive and grow in this challenging and highly competitive environment, companies need to have a highly innovative approach, keep a keen eye on the changing needs and expectations of the consumers and at the same time, build strong relationships with all the stakeholders, including the consumers who prove to be valuable contributors to new ideas, product improvements to meet the ever changing needs of the consumers. It is quite clear to understand that the generation of information plays a very crucial role in the formation of marketing strategies and it provides a link between the consumers and organizations.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

The laptop product category has achieved the highest degree of standardization of components, features and attributes. This product specialty has lost the ability of the consumers to differentiate in its product offerings given by the manufactures. It is an accepted fact that generation of information plays an important role in the field of policy formation, marketing planning, strategy making and it also bridges the gap between the buyers and the sellers. This is the hard fact that the contemporary laptop market is complex buyers' market. This is the biggest problem and greatest challenge being faced by the industry. The only strategies that are left at their disposal are either expanding their product assortment or make their offerings more and more attractive and clear to the target market. This therefore calls for an on-going in depth study of the consumer behaviour-internal drives and motives of the target market that influence their buying decision process of laptops. This study may provide the laptop companies with a launch pad and acts as a guide that can help the same in chalking out strategies to enlarge the market share and also



enhance the level of awareness among consumers. In short, it can be claimed to be an accurate report that may help them to gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of the study is to find out the consumer perceptions towards the various laptop brands. Secondary objectives of the study are:

1. To map the profile of respondents having a laptop.
2. To find out the brands of laptop being used by consumers.
3. To identify the sources which influence their choice of brand to be purchased.
4. To find out the type of outlets from where a consumer buys their laptop.
5. To check the importance and satisfaction level, with respect to the different factors of laptops for the brands they are using.
6. To find out if there is any association between importance level and the satisfaction level of consumers regarding different factors of laptops.
7. To analyze the brand loyalty of consumers regarding laptops.

LIMITATIONS:

In every research work there are some limitations and this research is no exception.

1. The study is limited to the attitudes and perceptions of the selected sample respondents and may not be universally applicable.
2. There was a possibility of the respondent bias in self-reporting perceptions of the survey.
3. The study is 'micro' in nature, and its survey findings and observations cannot be generalized and may be subjected to change from time to time and place to place.
4. As the sample size was 110 respondents, is not necessary that it truly represents the population universe.
5. Money was also one of limitations faced while conducting this research.
6. Some of the people were not interested in filling questionnaire; some people were taking this research seriously. Some people were engaged in their job hesitate to fill questionnaire and their personal details.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr.Nasir, Yoruker, Gunes, and Ozdemir (2006), in their article, "Factors influencing consumers" laptop purchases' studied that core technical features, post purchase services,



price and payment conditions, peripheral specifications, physical appearance, value added features, and connectivity and mobility are the seven factors that are influencing consumers' laptop purchases. Furthermore, price and payment condition factor shows significant difference among three consumer groups of a company's customer base.

Yateesh Hoblidar, Purav Singh & Tushar Alva (2009) in their study entitled "Studying the consumer buying behavior while buying a laptop" found that there is no significant relationship between laptop choice and the gender of the buyer. Educational qualification and annual family income have a significant impact on the choice of laptop brand. By using factorial analysis, convince features, heavy usage features, style, features, gaming features, easy movability features and security features were found as major factors, which were considered by consumers while buying a laptop.

Arasu (2010) in his study, "Research on laptop buying behavior of students in Symbiosis Info Tech Campus (SIC)" revealed that gender of the respondent, style, resale value, multimedia features, weight of the laptop are the factors which affect the buying behavior. To an extent value for money also plays a role in determining the choice. Most of the respondents preferred Dell laptops followed by Apple.

P.V. Ranjith and Ela Goyal (2011) in their article "A study on consumer perception- A case study for Laptops" stated that in spite of various brands in the market, Dell is the most popular brand of laptop and actually purchased by the consumers. The majority of respondents reported that they bought their laptop based on its features and referred their brands to others also. Education and browsing were found to be the most important uses of laptops.

Shashank Tripathi (2013) in his study, "A study of student's buying behaviour towards laptops" highlighted that the consumer decision-making process and buying behaviour are influenced by internal –as well as external factors. The internal factors consist of factors such as needs and motivation. External factors consist of culture, social class and family /household and reference groups. One of the important external factors is groups, friends & family. The majority of students like to shop with shopping companions. Their first choice is friends, followed by family members. The majority of student's decision-making style is quality consciousness, followed by price sensitiveness and service orientation.



Vijay R. Kulkarni (2013) in his study, "A factorial study of consumer buying behaviour of laptops of postgraduate students in Pune" stated that if you want to survive and grow in this challenging and highly competitive environment, companies need to have a highly innovative approach, keep a keen eye on the changing needs and expectations of the consumers. In the event of breakdown quick availability of spares and availability of service center is called for without which the customer cannot use the product and would definitely result in post purchase dissonance. It therefore calls on the part of the organizations to make available service facilities so that customers are put at ease, are satisfied and continue to use the products through their life time.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach: For collecting primary data, a survey approach was used.

Research instrument: A research questionnaire consisting of a set of questions was presented to the respondents to know the pre and post purchase behaviour regarding laptop.

Questionnaire design: For consumer survey, the questionnaire was prepared with a Likert scale and check list method.

Sample unit: Consumers of laptops

Sample size: The study involved an in-depth investigation of 110 sample respondents.

Sample procedure: The sampling technique used was judgmental sampling.

Time period of the study: February 2014 to May 2014.

Method of data collection: Collection of data is the next logical step after the sample had been chosen. Since the collection of data depends on the data collection method. Both primary and secondary data have been used in the present study. Primary data have been obtained through a well-designed questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected through several sources such as journals, related dissertation, rules and bylaws, internet, related books and newspapers.

Data Collection Tools: For the purpose collecting the data, two separate questionnaires were designed: One for the initial survey (pilot survey) and the other for the final survey. For the first phase, the questionnaire contained one question as follows: "Mention at least seven variables according to you- are important while purchasing a laptop." The second questionnaire had two such questions, which were as follows- "Rate the following factors in



the given scale (likert scale) on importance level and satisfaction level regarding laptop(six selected variables were shown).”

Analysis of data: The primary and secondary data were analyzed through the statistical methods. SPSS was used for analyzing the data collected. Some analytical techniques like percentage, weighted average score Kendall’s coefficient of concordance test and Chi-square were used to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

1.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Male	61	55.5
	Female	49	45.5
	Total	110	100
2.	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Less than 25 Years	30	27.3
	26 to 35 Years	44	40.0
	36 to 45 Years	28	25.5
	More than 46 Years	8	7.3
	Total	110	100
3.	Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Up to senior secondary	3	2.7
	Graduate	27	24.5
	Post Graduate	80	72.7
	Total	110	100
4.	Present Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Student	25	22.7
	Office goer	52	47.3
	Businessman	14	12.7
	Professional	19	17.3
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary Data

In order to study the consumers’ perceptions regarding laptops, the responses of 110 consumers of laptops from the NCR region were collected and tabulated with the help of spss software. Socioeconomic profile of the sample respondents is shown in table 1. Table exhibits that the gender composition of respondents was 55.5% males and 45.5% females. The majority (40%) of the sample respondents was about 26 to 35 years and 27.3% of total



respondents were less than 25 years. 25.5% of the sample respondents were about 36 to 45 years and rest (7.3%) were more than 46 years. 72.7% of sample respondents consisted of postgraduates, 24.5% comprised of graduates and 2.7 percent were educated up to senior secondary. The majority (47.3%) of sample respondents possessing laptops were office goers, 22.7% were students, 17.3% were professionals and 12.7% were businessman.

Table2: Source which Influenced the Respondents to Purchase their Respective Brands of Laptop

S.no.	Brand Names	Total	Purchase on the recommendation of			
			Friends & Relatives	Colleagues	Dealer	Self-decision
1	Dell	37(33.6)	10(34.5)	1(14.3)	4(44.4)	22(33.8)
2	HP	25(22.7)	6(20.7)	1(14.3)	1(11.1)	17(26.2)
3	Sony	15(13.6)	7(24.1)	1(14.3)	0(0)	7(10.8)
4	Lenovo	9(8.2)	1(3.4)	1(14.3)	3(33.3)	4(6.2)
5	HCL	8(7.3)	2(6.9)	0(0)	0(0)	6(9.2)
6	Acer	5(4.5)	0(0)	3(42.9)	1(11.1)	1(1.5)
7	Compaq	3(2.7)	1(3.4)	0(0)	0(0)	2(3.1)
8	Apple	3(2.7)	1(3.4)	0(0)	0(0)	2(3.1)
9	Samsung	2(1.8)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(3.1)
10	Toshiba	1(0.9)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.5)
11	LG	1(0.9)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.5)
12	IBM	1(0.9)	1(3.4)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
	Total	110	29(100)	7(100)	9(100)	65(100)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in parentheses are in percentage.

It is pertinent to identify the consumers of laptops in terms of “Brands in Use” and the sources on whose recommendation they purchased their respective brands of laptop. The table 2 exhibits that although different brands of laptops were being used by different respondents, but the majority of respondents (33.6%) possessed ‘Dell Brand’ of laptop followed by ‘HP Brand’ and ‘Sony Brand’ by 22.7% and 13.6% of respondents respectively. Few respondents had ‘Lenovo’, ‘HCL’, ‘Acer’, ‘Compaq’, ‘APPLE’, ‘LG’, ‘Toshiba’, ‘Samsung’ and ‘IBM’.



The table 2 clearly reveals that the majority of respondents (65%) took decision by themselves regarding the choice of brand of laptop. Friends and relatives (29% of respondents) and dealers (9 percent of respondents) were the other sources of influence regarding the brand to be purchased of the laptop. Recommendation of colleagues (7 percent of respondents) for brand choice of laptop was least preferred. By going through the responses, it is observed that the laptops of Dell brand and HP brand which were possessed by large no. of respondents were also purchased on the self-recommendation followed by friends and relatives recommendations.

It can be concluded that laptop being product of high value, consumers prefer to purchase a brand of his choice and it seems that after going through information available from reference groups like friends, relatives, dealers etc. Finally they go for own choice of brand while purchasing the laptop.

Figure: 1 Laptop Brands in Use

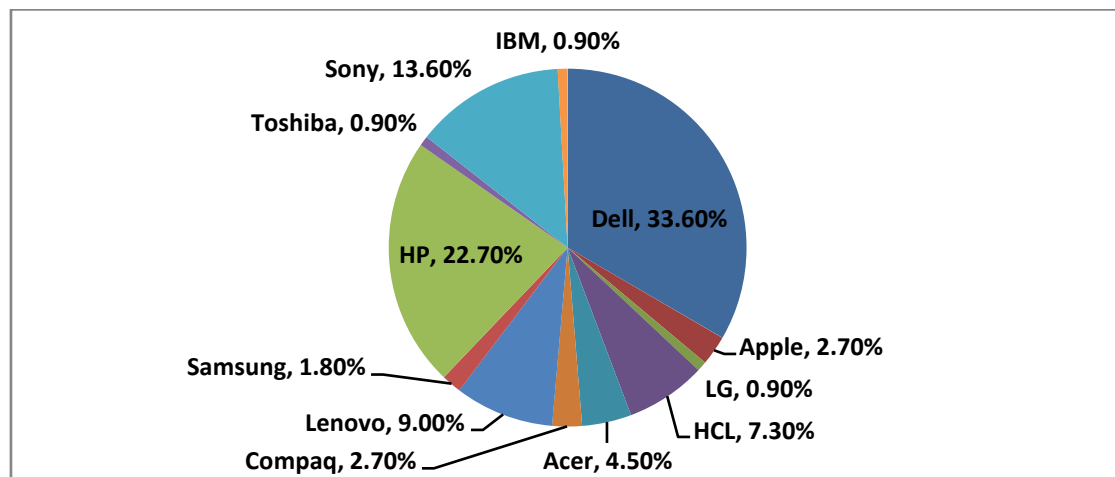


Figure 2: Purchased Laptop on the recommendation of

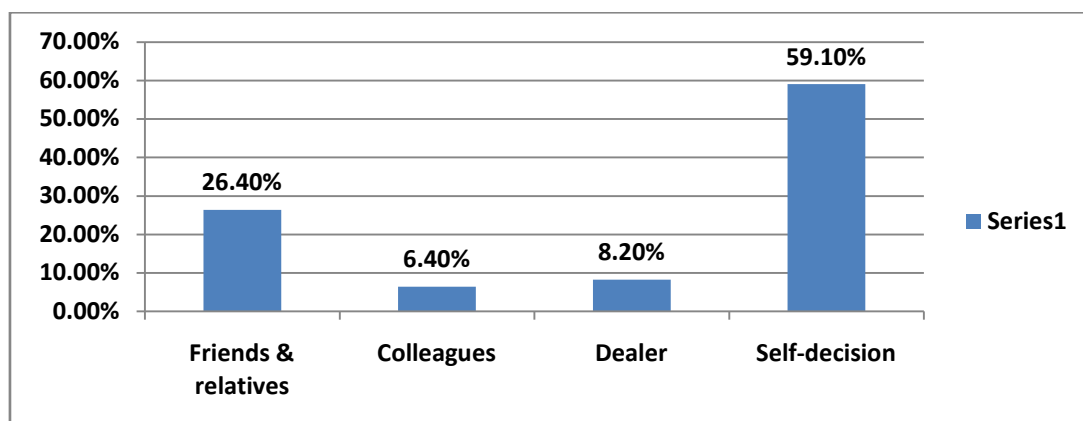




Table 3: Sale outlets from respondents purchased Laptops

S. No.	Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Local dealers	55	50.0
2	On-line shopping	6	5.5
3	Showrooms	47	42.7
4	Other country	2	1.8
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

An insight into the consumer's perception towards various sale outlets is highly essential and helpful to a manufacturer to build an efficient marketing infrastructure for the distribution of the products. The purpose of posing this query was to identify the outlets from which consumers prefer to identify the outlets from which consumers prefer to buy laptops. Table 3 reveals that the majority of respondents (50 percent) purchased their laptops from local dealers and a very large number of respondents (42.7 percent) purchased from showrooms. A very few respondents did on-line shopping and some respondents imported their laptops. Briefly speaking, local dealers and showrooms were preferred for purchasing laptops.

Figure 3: Sale outlets from respondents purchased Laptops

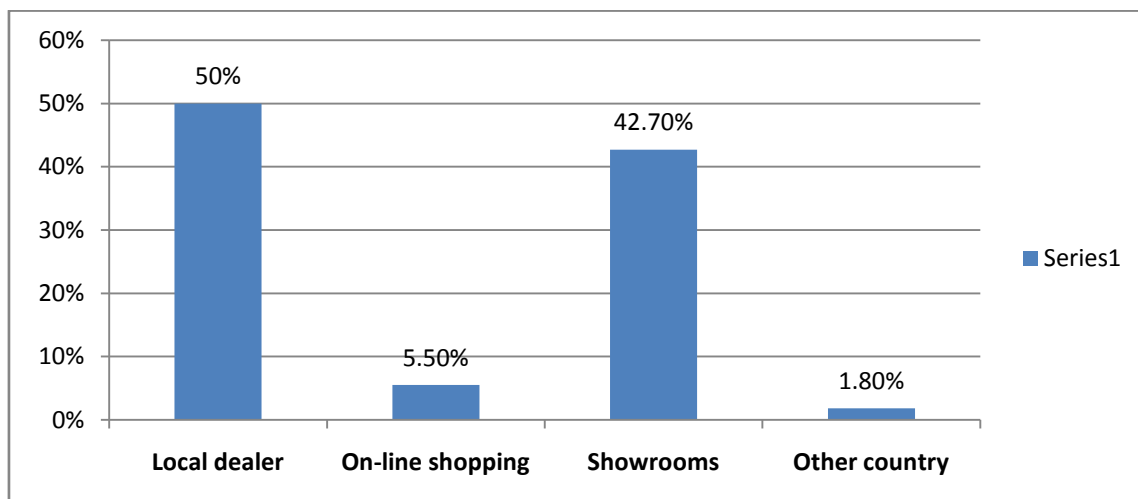


Table 4: Importance level regarding different factors relating to Laptops

Factors	Most Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Most Unimportant	WAS	Rank
1. Laptop Features	63 (57.3)	25 (22.7)	6 (5.5)	6 (5.5)	10 (9.1)	4.14	I
2. Price You pay	36 (32.7)	28 (25.5)	29 (26.4)	10 (9.1)	7 (6.4)	3.69	IV
3. Services	60 (54.5)	20 (18.2)	11 (10.0)	12 (10.9)	7 (6.4)	4.04	II



4.Promotional Offer/Ads	11 (10.0)	24 (21.8)	43 (39.1)	16 (14.5)	16 (14.5)	2.98	VI
5.Warranty/Guarantee	54 (49.1)	21 (19.1)	16 (14.5)	6 (5.5)	13 (11.8)	3.88	III
6.Dealer's Dealing	29 (26.4)	38 (34.5)	24 (21.8)	9 (8.2)	10 (9.1)	3.61	V

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in the parenthesis are in percentages.

To measure the degree of importance attached to different areas of marketing of laptops, a query was asked from respondents and responses were obtained on five point rating scale. It is evident from the table 4 that majority of respondents (80 percent) considered laptop features as a very important factor. Services, warranty/guarantee, dealer's dealing and price were also considered important factors by large no. of respondents. As far as a promotional offer/advertisement regarding laptop is concerned, it was the least important factor while purchasing the laptop. It was also noteworthy to mention that all the features listed in the survey were considered important by the respondents. Further analyzing the responses on the basis of the weighted average score, the table 4 reveals that laptop features and services had been rated as 'Important to Very Important' factors (scores being above 4) by average respondents. Warranty/ guarantee, price and dealer's dealing had been rated among 'Neutral to Important' while promotional offer/advertisement was rated among 'Unimportant to Neutral'. To know the relative importance of factors, laptop features had been given 1st rank as average of the scores is maximum in this case. Services, warranty/guarantee and price had got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively. The dealer's deal was ranked 5th and promotional offer/advertisement had been given rank 6 from the importance point of view in the case of purchase of laptop.

It can be concluded from the analysis that all the factors were considered important by consumers regarding laptops but comparatively features of laptop was considered the most important while purchasing laptops followed by services and warranty/guarantee.

To know the satisfaction level of respondents having laptops, an attempt was made. Table 5 reveals that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the features of the laptop they purchased (73.6%), the price they paid (66.4%) and services (64.5%) they availed from laptop dealers. Large number of respondents was satisfied with even regarding



warranty/guarantee and dealer's dealing regarding laptops. But as far as a promotional offer/advertisement factor regarding laptops was concerned, 40 percent of respondents were not in a position to say either satisfied or dissatisfied. Even a few respondents were dissatisfied with all these factors relating to laptops.

As far as the average consumer satisfaction was concerned, average respondent had got weighted average scores between 3 and 4 regarding all factors related to laptops. In this way all factors regarding laptop features, price, services availed, promotional offer/advertisement, warranty/guarantee and dealer's dealing had been rated in the range of 'Neutral to Satisfied' level. From the satisfaction point of view, laptop features had been ranked 1 (being maximum weighted average score 3.85), the price they paid at rank 2, services availed at rank 3, warranty/guarantee and dealer's dealing at ranks 4 and 5 respectively. Promotional offer/advertisement factor regarding laptop had got 6th rank from the satisfaction point of view.

Table 5: Satisfaction level of respondents regarding different factors of Laptops

Factors	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied	WAS	Rank
1.Laptop Features	37 (33.6)	44 (40.0)	11 (10.0)	12 (10.9)	6 (5.5)	3.85	I
2.Price you paid	29 (26.4)	44 (40.0)	20 (18.2)	10 (9.1)	7 (6.4)	3.71	II
3. Services availed	26 (23.6)	45 (40.9)	19 (17.3)	15 (13.6)	5 (5.5)	3.65	III
4.Promotional offer/ advertisement	11 (10.0)	31 (28.2)	44 (40.0)	18 (16.4)	6 (5.5)	3.21	VI
5.Warranty/ guarantee	27 (24.5)	35 (31.8)	24 (21.8)	18 (16.4)	6 (5.5)	3.54	IV
6.Dealer's dealing	24 (21.8)	36 (32.7)	24 (21.8)	14 (12.7)	12 (10.9)	3.42	V

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in Parenthesis are percentages.

To find out if there is any association between the importance level and satisfaction level of respondents regarding different factors of laptops, Kendall's coefficient of concordance test was applied. As indicated in table 6, calculated values shows that there is significant association between the importance level and satisfaction level of respondents regarding



different factors of laptops except between satisfaction level regarding price they paid and importance level regarding promotional offer/advertisement and between satisfaction level regarding dealer's dealing and importance level regarding promotional offer/advertisement of laptops.

Table 6 : Association between importance and satisfaction level regarding various factors of laptop

Satisfaction Level of Importance Level of		1. laptop features	2. Price you paid	3. Services availed	4. Promotional offer/Ads.	5. Warran ty/guar antee	6. Deal er's Deal ing
1. laptop features	Correlation Sig.	.442 .000	.364 .000	.484 .000	.301 .000	.461 .000	.318 .000
2. Price you pay	Correlation Sig.	.348 .000	.504 .000	.372 .000	.269 .001	.396 .000	.403 .000
3. Service	Correlation Sig.	.381 .000	.426 .000	.437 .000	.333 .000	.470 .000	.445 .000
4. Promotional offer/ Ads.	Correlation Sig.	.171 .033	.117 .143	.305 .000	.525 .000	.165 .036	.147 .061
5. Warranty/ Guarantee	Correlation Sig.	.408 .000	.425 .000	.461 .000	.347 .000	.498 .000	.431 .000
6. Dealer's dealing	Correlation Sig.	.292 .000	.370 .000	.450 .000	.284 .000	.406 .000	.522 .000

Source: Primary data

Brand loyal buyers provide the foundation for a stable and growing market share. An effort was made to ascertain whether the consumers surveyed had any brand loyalty for laptop used by them. Analysis of data given in table 7 indicates that the majority of respondents (36.4 percent) was of the view that they would like to shift to a new brand of laptop in future. 32.7 percent of respondents were uncertain about the brand of new laptop they would like to buy while 30.9 percent of respondents would like to stick to the same brand if they have to buy a new laptop in the future. The outcomes show that even a majority of respondents were in favor of moving to new brand for their future purchase of a laptop, but rather a large number of respondents were brand loyal regarding new purchases of laptop.

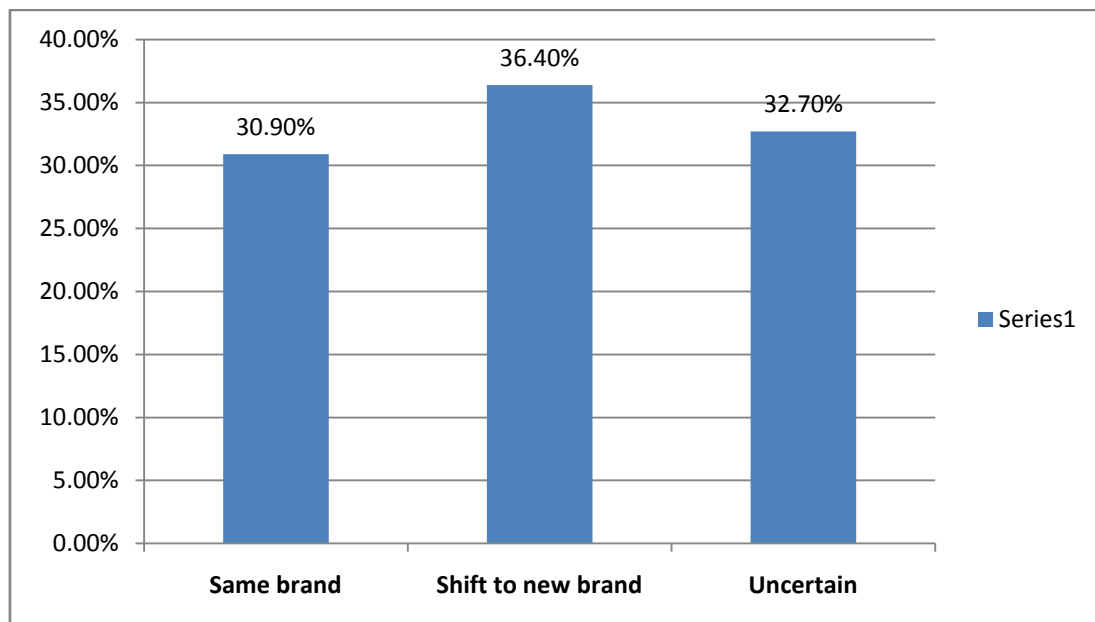


Table7: Frequency distribution of respondents regarding intensity of brand loyalty

S. No.	Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Same brand	34	30.9
2	Shift to new brand	40	36.4
3	Uncertain	36	32.7
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

Figure 4: Intensity of Brand Loyalty regarding Laptops



FINDINGS

1. A majority of respondents (67.3%) who were possessing laptops were less than 35 years.
2. A very large number of respondents who were possessing laptops were postgraduate and office goers.
3. The majority of respondents preferred to purchase a brand of their own choice after going through information available from reference groups like friends, relatives, dealers etc.
4. Local dealers and showrooms were preferred for purchasing laptops of their choice.
5. The laptop features, price, services, promotional offer/advertisement, warranty/guarantee and dealers' dealing, all these factors were considered important while purchasing laptops but comparatively features of laptops were considered the most important followed by services and warranty/guarantee.



6. As far as average respondent satisfaction level was concerned, all factors related to laptop, e.g. features, price, services, promotional offer/advertisement, warranty/guarantee and dealers' dealing had been rated in range of 'Neutral to Satisfied' level. Overall, laptop features had been ranked 1 followed by the price they paid as far as satisfaction level regarding laptop.
7. A majority of respondents were in favor of moving to new brand for their future purchase of a laptop, but rather a large number of respondents were brand loyal regarding new purchases of laptop.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Year by year, the number of people who are using and owning personal computers (PC) substantial increases in all over the world. Adverse to the founding years of data processors, today they have been applied by nearly all age groups, and by both males and females. Furthermore, consumers' desire for portable PCs forces the companies to produce laptops/notebooks. In such event, it becomes exceedingly important to determine the agents that are influencing consumers' purchase decisions. The customer base of a society is comprised of its current customers and those customers who are acquired from competitors can be either satisfied switchers or dissatisfied switchers. In this work, it has been found that features, price, services, guarantee/warranty, dealer's dealing and promotional offers/advertisement, all these elements, influence consumers' laptop purchase decisions. In order to improve the market share, companies should provide better featured laptops and should work on price strategy, easy availability of laptops. In order to retain the market share and improve the market share, marketers should also find out their loopholes, especially they should work on quality aspect and services aspect on their branding. The marketers should also plan and make strategies in order to tap the consumers from all segments.

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