

Consumer Behaviour: Buying a cellphone

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## **Consumer Behaviour: Buying a cellphone**

It was 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013, first Monday of the year and Areeb was going towards his university from his office as he had to attend a class of his BBA's last semester. While traveling his mind was on many things after all he was on the verge of completing his under graduation from a prestigious university in Lahore so he was thinking about the last projects, moreover he had established his own business since 2012 (last year) and it was also consuming more and more time as his sales were gradually rising, however, despite all this, nowadays, his thoughts were overshadowed by the notion of next mobile phone that he would be buying.

Recently, his previous mobile phone (Chinese copy of Nokia E-71) stopped charging and was unfortunately not repairable so he was left in immediate need of a new one.

As an independent earner and with good habit of saving he had some cash. His preference was buying a cellphone for as low price as possible, he considered something in the range of Rs. 5 – 6,000 to be sufficient as it would be easily replaceable in case it is lost or damaged.

Areeb never considered mobile a necessity and had used Nokia 1100 since his high secondary school. However, last year his brother gifted him a Chinese version of Nokia E71. It was a significant change for Areeb; from black & white small screen to coloured 2.2 inch, mere 200 contacts (because of which after every couple of months he had to delete a few to add new ones) to 1000 phone book memory, QWERTY keyboard that granted him some fast typing etc. He loved this set and considered it one of the best gifts he had ever received. After almost a year the set started having a couple of issues as some keys became hard and eventually it's charging IC got an issue and the set was no longer rechargeable. Areeb contacted a few repair shops but they could not have fixed it perhaps because of its rarity.

On temporary basis he started using his previous set (1100) and at the same time went on a full time search for next mobile. Whatever the free time he would get from his education and business he would

spend it on sites like whatmobile.com.pk, gsmarena.com, cnet.com etc. He also found that in terms of best performing mobile phone Samsung's Galaxy SIII was a mobile phone of the future, with quad-core processor and other attributes it is incomparable with any other set and wouldn't be replaceable in terms of technological prowess for a long time. Similarly, HTC One X and iPhone 5 would attract his attention but not only these were too expensive to be bought but there were also things that Areeb was interested in like QWERTY with slider and were not in the top class sets out there including Rs. 90,000 Nokia Oro and Rs. 100,000+ iPhone 5. He was often asking himself; should I go for original E71 the set that was so satisfactory? (It was only that its price was above Rs.20,000 which made him rethink that if he had to pay so much why shouldn't he consider buying a different and better alternative.) Should I buy a low end set that would suffice the communication need of calls and texts? In that case even Nokia 1100 is sufficient (that he was currently using) and there is no need of a new set. But the texting on traditional keypad became very difficult after using QWERTY for so much time now. Time was always of utmost importance to Areeb, he considered if buying a touchscreen would save it more, but then again its repair costs would be high (if required). He also came to know through one of his friends that in terms of OS (Operating System) 'Android' is the best out there, he reconfirmed it while searching through independent websites that with several thousand free apps it is preferred over all other Operating Systems.

Display size was also one of the concerns, especially in touch screen it appeared that even 3 to 3.5 inches may not be sufficient, however screens above 4 inches also were not very appealing to Areeb because he was not interested in very large sets.

Battery time / talk time was another worry, although he was a lot used to texting but that too would consume energy, he was certainly not comfortable with daily charge that most smartphones would require with even average use.

Camera, weight and wi-fi were all three of just normal importance to him. He would rarely need snapshot of something (usually his PS3's videogames) for selling online. He was comfortable with relatively heavy sets and preferred wi-fi though was not planning to use it much.

With all of these things in mind he started looking for sets that would meet these requirements. He was especially not interested in considering any set without QWERTY, slider and touchscreen.

In initial search only HTC Desire Z (at Rs. 29,500) and Samsung's S5333 (Rs. 15,000) or Samsung's B3410 (Rs. 10,500) fell in his criteria and somehow he didn't find either of these to be very appealing in terms of appearance. Then he one day saw Nokia's E7 while searching online, although he was not considering buying a mobile phone with Symbian (OS) [HTC and Samsung both mostly use Android, Nokia on the other hand uses Symbian] but E7's black colour and design just got his heart stuck to it (see figure-01). He did a thorough research about its pros and cons and included it in his evoked set (see exhibit-01).



Figure-01: Mobile phones with QWERTY keypad, slider and touchscreen.

Mobiles with QWERTY, slider and touchscreen				
	Nokia E7	HTC Desire Z	Samsung S5330	Samsung B3410
Price	36,000	29,500	15,500	10,500
Design	Elegant	Average	Average	Poor
Phonebook	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	1000
Display size	4"	3.7"	3.2"	2.6"
OS	Symbian	Android	Bada OS	Unknown
Battery (talk time)	9h	9h 50min	14h	5.5h
Camera	8MP (720p)	5MP (720p)	3.15mp	2mp
Weight	176g	180g	118g	114g
Wi-Fi	yes	yes	yes	No

Exhibit-01: Mobile phones with QWERTY keypad, slider and touchscreen.

## Questions

1. From Areeb's behavior explain first two steps of 'buyer's decision process' i.e. 'need recognition' and 'information search'.
2. Based on Areeb's preferences which set should he buy? Are the benefits of E7 sufficient to offset its disadvantages?
3. If you were to search for a mobile phone which attributes would you consider more important than others? Create your grid and compare it with Areeb's, why do you think there are differences?