

A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS TELECOM SERVICE PROVIDERS (BSNL and AIRTEL) IN TRICHY TOWN

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Abstract:

Mobile services were introduced in India in the year 1995. Licenses were issued in 20 circles which were roughly contiguous to the states and for four metros. For the first few years, the mobile services sector saw a lot of turmoil which ended with the new telecom policy of 1999. After that the mobile services took off, but not without hiccups. However in a span of 15 years the number of customers has crossed 900 million marks in 2015. The number of customers' growth per year up to 2015 was exponential in both the GSM and CDMA networks. The whooping growth was attributed not only in the government policies and need of the people but also to the very aggressive marketing schemes and policies adopted by the companies. The telephone services which were considered as a luxury, after few years it has become accessible for all class of people. In the aspect the present study focuses on the customer preferences towards the selected mobile service providers in research area.

Keywords: Mobile services, customer preferences, customer satisfaction,

INTRODUCTION

The Telecom Sector is one of the fastest growing Sectors. It offers three categories of services, namely, fixed line, wireless and cellular service. The cellular service is called as mobile service because of its nature of usage. There are two types of mobile service networks (a) Global System for Mobile (GSM) and (b) Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA). The band width of GSM varies from CDMA. The study revolves around the operators of GSM service. The service industry supports the natural economy with more than 55 per cent growth rate. Its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is less than 20 per cent. To hasten the growth and strengthen the Indian Economy, it is essential to study the nature of service offered. The study is enlightened to the service quality of GSM networks.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recently, the Mobile operators are subject to comments and criticism for various reasons. Their services are not only commendable, but also satisfying to the consumers to some extent. The important threats of cellular mobile service market in India are high costs of service provision, low-income among the people cannot be offered to replicate expensive telecom infrastructure, political instability, China's early liberalization, threats from WLL service providers and also from satellite phones. The customer's expectations and knowledge of the mobile phone service are also increasing at the other hand. Hence the service providers are facing challenges, not only from the competitors, but also from their customers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The article aims at studying the present market scenario of Telecom Service in Trichy town. The major players in the market are (i) BSNL (ii) Airtel

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the customer satisfaction towards mobile service providers.
2. To study and identify how the customers are benefited
3. To access the needs and expectations of the customers in order to the requirement of their current satisfaction level.
4. To understand the performance of different brands in the market on various parameters

i.e. Network Satisfaction, GPRS, SMS pack, customer care, free talk time, festival offer, full talk time, free roaming, validity, connection charges, ease of availability of retailers selling recharge coupon, ease of availability of the retailers transferring recharge voucher and online recharge.

Bharti Airtel Ltd is one of the world's leading providers of telecommunication services with presence in 19 countries including India & South Asia and Africa. The company is the largest wireless service provider in India, based on the number of customers. The company offers an integrated suite of telecom solutions to its enterprise customers, in addition to providing long distance connectivity both nationally and internationally. The Company also offers Digital TV and IPTV Services. All these services are rendered under a unified brand 'Airtel' either directly or through subsidiary companies.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd., (BSNL) was incorporated on 15th September 2000. It took over the business of providing of telecom services and network management from the erstwhile Central Government Departments of Telecom Services (DTS) and Telecom Operations (DTO), with effect from 1st October 2000 on going concern basis. It is one of the largest & leading public sector units providing comprehensive range of telecom services in India.

BSNL has installed Quality Telecom Network in the country & now focusing on improving it, expanding the network, introducing new telecom services with ICT applications in villages & winning customer's confidence. Today, it has about 36.42 million line basic telephone capacity,

7.13 million WLL capacity, 95.96 million GSM capacity, 34,727 fixed exchanges, 1,17,090 GSM BTSs, 9,594 CDMA Towers, 102 Satellite Stations, 7,73,976 Rkm. of OFC, 4751 Rkm. of microwave network connecting 646 districts, 4519 cities/towns & 6.25 lakhs

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Some of the important related studies were reviewed for the support of the present study.

Robins (2008) this paper is about marketing the next generation of mobile Telephones. The study is about third generation of cell phone technology, what is usually known as “3G” for short. There are various issues about that new innovative. One is how to price 3G handsets and services at a level which will enable telephone operating companies to recoup the high prices they have already paid to governments for operating licenses. Second the technology is not yet complete, there are no agreed international standards and companies do not yet know what new services the technology will prove capable of delivering effectively. All variants of 3G remain dependent on largely unproven technology. Marketing 3G is going to be about services which are new and in many cases, yet to be designed. At the same time, it will involve services which can also be obtained by computer and other means. It follows that the marketing task will be high risk. First, 3G has no obviously unique selling proposition to build on except, perhaps, the combination of live video and easy portability. Second, the potential customers have not yet had adequate opportunity to signal their service likes and dislikes. Third, the cost and complexity of service provision leave doubt about the market’s reaction to price.

Debnath (2008) this study explains that the prime focus of the service providers is to create a loyal customer base by benchmarking their performances and retaining existing customers in order to benefit from their loyalty. With the commencement of the economic liberalization in 1991, and with a view to expand and improve telecom infrastructure through the participation of the private sector, the Government of India permitted foreign companies holding 51 percent equity stake in joint ventures to manufacture telecom equipment in India. The Indian Government has announced a new policy, which allows private firms to provide basic telephone services. There had been a monopoly of the state-owned department of telecommunications. However, several companies are expected to benefit from the policy change.

Kalavani (2006) in their study analyzed that majority of the respondents have given favorable opinion towards the services but some problems exist that deserve the attention of the service providers. They need to bridge the gap between the services promised and services offered. The overall customers’ attitude towards cell phone services is that they are satisfied with the existing services but still they want more services to be provided.

Kumar (2008), in their study titled “Customer Satisfaction and Discontentment of BSNL Landline Service: A Study” analyzed that at present, services marketing plays a major role in the national economy. In the service sector, telecom industry is the most active and attractive. Though the telecom industry is growing rapidly, India’s telecom density is less than the world’s average telecom density as most of India’s market is yet to be covered. This attracts private operators to

enter into the Indian telecom industry, which makes the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) more alert to run its business and survive in the market.

Kalpana *et al.*, (2006) in their study titled “Promotional Strategies of Cellular Services: A Customer Perspective” analyzed that the increasing competition and changing taste and preferences of the customer’s all over the world are forcing companies to change their targeting strategies. The study revealed the customer attitude and their satisfaction towards the cellular services in Coimbatore city. It was found that advertisement play a dominant role in influencing the customers but most of the customers are of opinion that promotional strategies of cellular companies are more sale oriented rather than customer oriented.

Debarun Chakraborty (2013), in his article determined the customer satisfaction & expectation towards a telecommunication company in West Midnapore which is a district of West Bengal. A descriptive study was conducted to achieve the objectives. In total 250 respondents filled a well-structured questionnaire having a list of statements pertaining to products, services & facilities provided by the service provider. Results reveal that the dimensions which influence the satisfaction level of customer’s are: Core services (like good coverage, good connectivity and network quality) and call rate. Further results show that there is a significant relation between the brand name and the preference of customers. Hence, it has been recommended that telecom companies should focus on connectivity, call rate, coverage and network quality.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

- A Company can use the study as feedback.
- Retailers can use the study for updating their stores.
- A student may use the study for the help of his thesis.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

Carrying the survey was general learning experience for me but I also faced some problems while collecting primary data. These are listed below:

- Generally the respondents were busy in their work and were not interested in responding rightly.
- Most respondent were not maintaining proper knowledge of various facilities provided by their company. So they were unable to provide right information.
- Some of respondent were using the first time of their company and they were not properly differentiate among their product.
- Due to human behaviour information may be biased. Mainly in Vodafone case.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research is followed in this research. The universe of the population includes the respondents who are the customers of BSNL and Airtel, located at Trichirappalli town The samples (i.e. sample size 50) were selected among the customers of BSNL and Airtel, located at research area. The samples were chosen from the population, by using Convenience sampling technique (i.e.

Non-probability sampling technique), because the exact population size is unknown and the accessibility of the customer is difficult. Survey method of data collection was used in this research. The primary data were collected using structured questionnaire.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Customer Satisfaction Business always starts and closes with customers and hence the customers must be treated as the King of the market. All the business enhancements, profit, status, image etc. of the organization depends on customers. Hence it is important for all the organizations to meet all the customers' expectations and identify that they are satisfied customer. Customer satisfaction is the measure of how the needs and responses are collaborated and delivered to excel customer expectation. It can only be attained if the customer has an overall good relationship with the supplier.

In today's competitive business marketplace, customer satisfaction is an important performance exponent and basic differentiator of business strategies. Hence, the more is customer satisfaction; more is the business and the bonding with customer. Customer satisfaction is a part of customer's experience that exposes a supplier's behavior on customer's expectation. It also depends on how efficiently it is managed and how promptly services are provided. This satisfaction could be related to various business aspects like marketing, product manufacturing, engineering, quality of products and services, responses customer's problems and queries, completion of project, post delivery services, complaint management etc. Customer satisfaction is the overall essence of the impression about the supplier by the customers.

This impression which a customer makes regarding supplier is the sum total of all the process he goes through, right from communicating supplier before doing any marketing to post delivery options and services and managing queries or complaints post delivery. During this process the customer comes across working environment of various departments and the type of strategies involved in the organization.

This helps the customer to make strong opinion about the supplier which finally results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Customer's perception on supplier helps the customer choose among the supplier on basis of money value and how well the delivered products suit all the requirements. The supplier's services never diminishes after the delivery as customer seeks high values post marketing services which could help them use and customize the delivered product more efficiently. If he is satisfied with the post marketing services then there are good chances for supplier to retain the customers to enhance repeated purchases and make good business profits.

It is necessarily required for an organization to interact and communicate with customers on a regular basis to increase customer satisfaction. In these interactions and communications it is required to learn and determine all individual customer needs and respond accordingly. Even if the products are identical in competing markets, satisfaction provides high retention rates. For example, shoppers and retailers are engaged with frequent shopping and credit cards to gain customer

satisfaction, many high end retailers also provide membership cards and discount benefits on those cards so that the customer remain loyal to them. Higher the satisfaction level, higher is the sentimental attachment of customers with the specific brand of product and also with the supplier.

This helps in making a strong and healthy customer-supplier bonding. This bonding forces the customer to be tied up with that particular supplier and chances of defection very less. Hence customer satisfaction is very important panorama that every supplier should focus on to establish a renounced position in the global market and enhance business and profit.

METHODS TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- 1) Complaints and suggestion system: Companies obtaining complaints through their customer service centers, and further suggestions were given by customers to satisfy their desires.
- 2) It is useful to measure the customer's willingness to recommend the company and brand to other persons.
- 3) Lost Customer Analysis: Companies should contact customers who have stopped buying or who have switched to another supplier to learn why this happened.
- 4) Consumer Behavior V/s Consumption Behavior: Consumer behavior refers to the manner in which an individual reaches decision related to the selection, purchases and use of goods and services.

Walters and Paul says that, consumer behavior is the process whereby the individual's decides what, when, how and from whom to purchase goods & services. Consumer behaviour relates to an individual person (Micro Behaviour) whereas consumption behaviour relates to and to the mass or aggregate of individuals (Micro behaviour) consumers behaviour as a study focuses on the decision process of the individual consumer or consuming unit such as family. In contrast the consumption behavior as a study is to do with the explanation of the behavior of the aggregate of consumers or the consuming unit. Consumer is a pivot, around which the entire system of marketing revolves. The study of buyer behavior is one of the most important keys to successful mark.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRITATION

The results of analysis are presented below:

It is inferred that majority (54%) of the respondents who fall between the age of 18-25 are the customers of BSNL and Airtel. Majority (76%) of the respondents are male. Majority (58%) of the respondents belongs to the student category

it is clear that most of the customers in both the companies are using it since 1 year (14 and 18 respectively), the monthly expenditure in Airtel is between 200-500 (11) and BSNL is 500-100

(18), also most of them are rating it good (24 in Airtel and 23 in BSNL Both have equally responded by saying that there is hidden cost (16), most of them in both the services are using 3G services more (16 and 18 respectively) and most of them equally for both companies are recommending it to others.

It is inferred that all the satisfaction features are similar in the situation. Still data plan, signal, compatibility and all others are showing better satisfaction level. Also the p values are above 0.05, so the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents with respect to the factors of customer satisfaction of BSNL and Airtel.

There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with respect to the factors of customer satisfaction of BSNL and Airtel like tariff, service coverage, data plan, compatibility and several other services.

There is association between type of plan and level of satisfaction on quality of services like tariff, service coverage, data plan, compatibility and several other services.

From the mean and std. deviation, it is inferred that the satisfaction level of customers are average with respect to tariff, service coverage, data plan, compatibility and other factors ranging from 3.00 to 3.65

There is no significant association between plan and call tariff. There is no significant association between STD and ISD plan and call tariff.

CONCLUSION

Through the research paper entitled, “A Comparative study on Customer satisfaction of BSNL and Airtel with reference to Trichirappalli town.”, it is concluded that the variables such as age group, gender etc. are having less impact on the factors of customers satisfaction.

The research outcome also indicates that, most of the customers were satisfied towards BSNL and Airtel with respect to the chosen factors. This study also indicates that the customers' satisfaction is comparatively slight advanced with in BSNL and Airtel.

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