



A closer insight into the factors affecting customer satisfaction in telecommunication industry

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ABSTRACT

Air, food, water, shelter, clothing and smartphones! Those are new necessities of modern world. Mobile is something used by everyone like basic necessity, so it can be rightly said that 'AATA' and 'DATA' are equally important for human beings in today's world. By keeping in mind the challenges faced by each of the telecommunication operators because customers have grown to expect more by paying less and the relevance of mobile phone services for every single human being, right from old aged person down to the infant are increasing. The purpose of present study is to reveal and list down all factors explored and supported by literature review. Moreover, list down all other factors which are significant currently, but not studied by previous researchers & have positive influence on customer satisfaction in telecom industry.

Vodafone, Idea Cellular, Airtel Bharti, Reliance Jio and BSNL are the most commonly used telecommunication service providers chased by Tata Docomo, Reliance Infocom and Aircel in Haryana. When it comes to attract, satisfy and retain consumer, the telecom operator has faced significant challenges in recent months, especially after entry of Reliance jio. It becomes very difficult for any telecom operator to stay in market and to increase its revenue market share. This study is conducted because of its relevance for service providers and helps them to retain, maintain and satisfy customer. Moreover, this study helps telecom operators in today's constantly –connected and changing world where consumers have huge amount of choice and demand more from the brands that they engage with. The results of this conceptual paper revealed that the important or significant determinants which influence consumer choice more are **service quality** (both functional and technical quality), **corporate/brand image, customized plans and sales promotional offers** and **price/ call and data tariff**.

PURPOSE

The Indian Telecom industry is a competitive one and is one of the leading and constantly growing countries in the world which has contributed not only in development of rural and urban areas but also provides infrastructure for national security and technological foundation for societal communication. Telecommunication is a growth business and major edifice of its growth lies in satisfying consumer needs and demands because a consumer, who is using service, generates heavy revenues and source of huge profits. So, there is need to throw light on important factors which boost customer satisfaction directly and increases company revenues indirectly. Specially, this paper seeks answers to an important question which have been extracted from literature to

investigate factors which significantly affects customer satisfaction among various telecommunication service providers in Haryana.

Design/Methodology / Approach

Firstly, the researcher in this study titled “Factors affecting Customer Satisfaction: A conceptual review of Indian Mobile Telecommunication services.” investigated all factors explored and studied by previous researchers and then pen down all factors to make a tentative list. After this, the researcher tried to summarize the list by identifying the most studied significant factors discussed by many authors in their papers which heighten customer satisfaction, market share and confirmed continued success for telecom companies. Moreover, this study gives generic insights for mobile operators to get competitive edge over rivals and brand building strategies. Moreover, customer satisfaction brings customer loyalty (Kim et. al., 2004).

Findings:

The significant factors explored and supported by earlier studies that affects the choice of consumers towards various telecommunication service providers were service quality includes both **technical/product quality**(indicator of network performance in terms of product quality, drop rate of call, network coverage and congestion) and **functional quality** (Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Tangibility, Convenience), Corporate image, Pricing policies, customized plans and sales promotional offers. These factors were the most studied and researched variables which lead to consumer satisfaction towards telecommunication services. The factors which are not significant, less discussed& least supported by literature review were Mobile device functionality and design, influence of media and advertisement, recommendations by friends, relatives, user friendly website, security deposits and innovations etc.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Information in this study can be useful for cellular service providers to increase customer satisfaction, improve reputation, and increase the market share.
- Information generated from this research paper can be useful for the managers of company for building marketing strategies.
- Researchers can make use the results of this study as references and for doing future work.

Keywords: Telecom industry, Customer satisfaction, Mobile service providers, Customer satisfaction determinants.

Introduction: Indian Mobile Market:

Telecommunication sector has assumed an essential position in an increasingly technology – driven society of knowledge intensive world. This sector has become an important contributor of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and play an important role in creating employment opportunities. According to Press Release No 48/2018 estimates, Telecom sector contributed witnessed ‘India’ as the world second- largest telecommunication market with total telephone subscribers (wire line + wireless) as per the reports published on 24th April, 2018 is 1179.83 million. The wireless segment dominates the telecom market having 89.12% of total telephone subscriptions. India holds the position of second largest country in terms of Internet subscriber.

Current scenario: A Snapshot

The information and statistics showed here are the performance indicators of Indian telecommunication sector. These highlights of telecom subscription data (as per the press release report by TRAI) on 24th April, 2018:

• **Telecom Operational data:**

- 1) Telephone subscribers: According to Press Release No-48/2018 estimates as on 24st April, 2018, the number of telephone subscribers wireless and wire line both are 1179.83 million. Out of this, Wireless subscribers are 1156.87 million and Wire line subscribers are 22.97 million. The Urban subscribers are 669.63 million and the rural subscribers are 510.20 million.
- 2) Teledensity: The highlights of telecom subscription data as on 24th April, 2018 press release no. 48/2018 showed overall teledensity (Wire line and wireless) is 90.89%. Out of this, wireless teledensity is 89.12% and Wire line density is 1.77%. The Urban teledensity (in %) is 163.24 and rural teledensity (in %) is 57.47.
- 3) Broadband subscribers: As on 24th April, 2018, the total broadband subscribers are 392.06 million.

Objective of the study and methodology:

In view of all above issues, this paper makes an attempt/ effort to bring to light the list of factors triggered customer satisfaction towards various telecommunication service providers. This conceptual paper major managerial implication is that it contributes to the literature already available, reviewed and explored by developing a theory based framework which gives in –depth understanding of concept of customer satisfaction, service quality, corporate image, sales promotional offers, customized plans & price/ tariff while also proposing a tool helpful for managers of these big telecom companies that can be used for monitoring and enhancement of customer satisfaction. Moreover, this paper presents a refined integrated conceptual framework in this field. This study on public and private telecom operators throws light on extensive literature review to trace and investigate the important factors of customer satisfaction in their research work.

Developments in the conceptual framework:

There has been abundance of research which aims at discussing the concepts, importance and essential determinants of customer satisfaction which helps in choice of selecting telecom service providers. Observations from literature about “customer satisfaction” are given below. The detailed list is further expressed in the Bibliography. In this paper, researcher has made a big attempt to investigate the customer satisfaction concept & factor wise insights are given for deep & proper understanding of significant factors leads to customer satisfaction in respect to cellular phone subscribers in telecom industry.

Observations from literature:

Customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is not a new concept. During last 10 years, the concept of satisfaction has treated as one of the chief concern for researchers and marketers (Jamal, 2004; Kotler & Keller, 2006). CS is regarded as a fundamental determinant of long term consumer behaviour (Oliver, 1980). Rich source of existing literature available gives plethora of meanings, concepts regarding the term satisfaction. It has been extensively studied by many marketing scholars and researchers (Oliver, 1977, 1980 & 1999; Johnson et.al., 2001; Anderson et.al., 2004; Mcquitty et.al., 2000; Eshghi et.al., 2008). It’s a marketing tool for customer oriented/centric companies (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It is an essential factor behind every business success. Moreover, satisfying & creating loyal customer is an important tool for securing a competitive advantage (Metzler & Hinterhuber, 1988; Mittal et. al., 2005).

Despite of extensive research available, the researchers failed to develop a consensual definition of customer satisfaction. Therefore, this term needs to be modified as per the sector and service in consideration. Customer Satisfaction, abbreviated as **CSAT** or **Csat**. This is the combination of two words: customer + satisfaction. A **Customer** is a person who buys goods and services from buyer & **Satisfaction** is an internal feeling of being satisfied. It is a judgement that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption- related fulfilment, including levels of under- fulfilment or over- fulfilment (**Oliver et.al., 1977**). Collectively, the concept customer satisfaction is satisfying fundamental expectations of a customer. It's a person's feelings of pleasure and displeasure arises due to a comparison between perceived performance and expectations (Philip Kotler). It is end result or outcome after consuming product or service. Customer satisfaction and customer focus are the leading indicators of every business concern (Balanced score card).

Customer satisfaction is objective of every business unit because it's significantly related with profits and reputation. The chief aim of every business unit is to attract, influence and sustain more and more customers. Therefore, business organisations give best service to the customer and also chase the reason that can increase the customer satisfaction level. Satisfied and contented customers will repeat the purchase, always loyal towards business and increase the sales by positive word of mouth advertising (Dispensa, 1997; Aaker, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1997) Different authors have given different list of dimensions that leads to customer satisfaction. In order to gain satisfaction of customer, a business organisation must trace all the factors affecting customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Motley, 2003).

Customer satisfaction in telecommunication:

Table: Select ten renowned works in Customer Satisfaction Measurement in mobile telecom industry in India or in World.

S. NO.	AUTHORS, YEAR	FIELD OF STUDY, AREA	METHODOLOGY	RESULTS/ FINDINGS
1.	Abdolreza Eshghi et.al., 2008	Indian mobile telecom Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from users in 4 cities i.e. Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. Sample size: 350 Tools: Multiple regression analysis. 	Explored 6 factors affect CS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Relational quality 2.Competitiveness 3.Reliability 4.Reputation 5.Support features 6. Transmission quality.
2	Sabbir Rahman et.al., 2010	Malaysian mobile phone operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from consumers of 3 operators from major cities Sample size: 400 Tools: EFA, CFA, SEM. 	Explored 4 factors. It is revealed price/ call rate is a major factor followed by service quality, service availability and promotion.
3	Muhammad Ishtiaq Ishaq, 2011	Pakistan telecommunication industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from Pakistan mobile phone users Tool: Stepwise regression used 	Explored 6 dimensions to CS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Value added services Mobile device Customer service Pricing Billing system Results revealed that out of six, 3 factors i.e. VAS, Customer

				service, pricing have positive influence on CS.
4	Mohammed M. Almosawi, 2012	Bahrain mobile telecom industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from male & female mobile users. • Sample size: 228 • Tools: Means scores & percentage scores 	Explored 3 factors considered to be significant. Financial aspect Communication quality Intercommunication aspect Study revealed that financial factors (call & data charges) affect most.
5	Shahzad khan, Saima Afsheen, 2012	Peshawar region cellular industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from university students of 5 university • Sample size: 150 • Tools: Correlation & Regression analysis performed 	Study explored 6 factors Customer services Price fairness Sales promotion Coverage Support services Promotion Among all, price fairness is chief variable affects CS followed by coverage. Least affected factor is promotion.
6	Debarun Chakraborty, 2013	Mobile phone users, West Midnapore district in West Bengal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from users of AIRCEL. • Sample size: 250 • Tools: percentage with charts, diagrams, weighted average method used 	Dimensions affected CS : Essential services like data coverage, connections & strength of network and call rate. Also show significant relation between brand name & preference of customers.
7	Anantha Raj A. Arokiasamy et.al., 2013	Malaysian Cellular industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from current users of GSM providers. • Sample size: 225 users • Tools: Regression analysis 	Study explored 5 SQ dimensions affect CS. Results revealed that product quality, price, service quality have positive influence on CS.
8	Md. Hasebur Rahman, 2014	Bangladesh mobile telecom industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from mobile phone users • Sample size: 282 • Tool: Multiple regression analysis 	Explored 10 factors affect CS. Service innovativeness Service reliability Service competence Service consistency Network Pricing 'quality of offerings Customer demand VAS Contribution for society Results revealed that service related top four factors in the list affect CS the most.

9	Kobra veisi et.al., 2015	Hyderabad mobile phone operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from Idea, Voda, AirTel & Bsnl mobile users. Sample size: 369 Correlation, Regression, ANOVA 	Findings revealed that SERQUAL gap model has direct strong influence on CS.
10	G.S. popli et.al.	Delhi , NCR mobile phone operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected from users of mobile phone residing in Delhi, NCR region Sample size: 150 Tool: Correlation & Regression analysis performed 	Study explored 6 factors affect CS. Price fairness Sales promotion Network coverage Network signal strength Promotional activities Customer services Findings revealed that most imp factor is price fairness chased by coverage area.

Exploratory insights from literature about variables affecting CS.: From the above table variables influencing to select mobile telecom operators are given below:

- 1. Service quality:** Two diverse but highly associated constructs are service quality and customer satisfaction (G.S. Suresh chandar, 2002). Findings exposed during the exploratory investigations that service quality is a noteworthy determinant to motivate customer (Mian Usman Sattar, 2012) as well as basic cause to attract and satisfy customer (Syed Saad Andaleeb, 2006). Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature for service quality being an antecedent of customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is concluded that in order to achieve customer satisfaction service quality is the most important and influential factor. Service quality is a general idea derived from specific instances, which is difficult to delineate and measure. Over the last 30 years, there has been an extensive research on service quality different definitions, concepts and dimensions (Hoolbrook, 1994) and the connotations about service quality vary in terms of area, person and situation. According to one illustrious old concept, service quality is the difference between customer expectations and customer performance perceptions, using 22 items and 5 dimensional structures (Gronroos, 1984; Parshuraman 1988, 1989). They further pointed out that service quality is assessed as a chief instrument and a criterion to make overall assessment in service marketing. Literature review concluded that service quality is a distinct, global and important aspect of product and service offerings (Carucina, 2002). Parsuraman, Zeithmal, Berry(1985) conceptualized the original generic model for service quality and has identified 10 useful criterion or dimensions to measure service quality i.e. reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding the customer and service accessibility. In 1990, due to some criticisms from other researchers, they further revised these ten dimensions and reduced this to five in number i.e. reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility and empathy. These five dimensions form SERQUAL model (Brensinger&Lambert, 1990; Carman, 1990; Parasuraman 1985, 88.91; Woodside 1989) and acts as an essential indicator of customer satisfaction (spring and Machoy, 1996) for its robust and well defined structure. These concepts are widely used, supported and comprehended by **academicians** (Babakaus & Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Webster, 1989), **researchers** (Carman, 1990; Dabholkar, 1996; Zhu, 2002) and **managers** (Parasuraman et.al.) in various sectors like banks, telecommunication and

insurance companies. But it had its own share of criticisms due to the problems of reliability, discriminant validity and variance. These problems have been questioned by several rational researchers (Babakaus & Boller, 1992); Brown et.al., 1993; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993; Oliver, 1993). Furthermore, Babakaus & Boller, 1992 suggested, after conducting research, that dimensions of SERQUAL may not be universal across all sectors and services as its difficult to measure items of customer perception every time. The shortcomings of SERQUAL gap model by PZB gave an impetus to the SERPERF model, i.e. service quality with perception only given by Groonos, Cronin& Taylor (1992) for measuring and modelling service quality in telecommunication industry including fixed line and cellular services (Dabholkar et.al., 2000). SERPERF MODEL is based on the same 22 items with 5 dimensional structures (known as Functional quality) like in SERQUAL MODEL (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility) but in this service quality is assessed only by calculating performance related scores. Functional quality attributes play an important role in measuring service quality. Further research concluded that SERPERF, perception-performance methodology, is a superior methodology but not comprehensive in overall assessment of service quality (Mangold & Babakus, 1991; Richard & Allaway, 1993) in telecommunication sector because a customer gets satisfaction from QoS (Quality of Service) which is sum total of functional quality dimension and technical quality dimension but unfortunately, **technical aspect** is not taken into consideration by SERPERF. Therefore, the present study adopted a combined approach i.e. UNIFIED APPROACH by combining functional as well as technical attributes for proper and sound measurement & modelling of service quality of cellular services (Anita Seth et.al., 2008) Moreover, on the basis of findings discovered during the exploratory inquiries, convenience dimension is also added in the novel SERQUAL scale, long-established by detailed analysis and validation process in an empirical paper authored by Anita Seth et.al (2008). Therefore, in this conceptual paper, the researcher concluded that, in telecommunication sector, **service quality** is sum total of **functional quality** (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility) along with element of convenience and **technical quality** means customer perceived network quality.

Important dimensions of service quality in the field of telecommunication industry with their meanings:

Broad category	Service quality dimensions	Description	Relevance from literature
(A) Functional quality	1. Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides services as promised Service provider is dependable and maintain records accurately Provides service right the first time. 	Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,1988; Finn and Lamb,1991; Rosen and karwan,1994
	2. Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff willingness to help customers Staff provide prompt services 	Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,1988; Finn and Lamb,1991; Rosen and karwan,1994
	3. Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper knowledge of employees Courtesy of employees Ability to inspire trust and confidence 	Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,1988; Finn and Lamb,1991; Rosen and karwan,1994
	4. Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff willingness to provide a caring and personalized attention to each customer 	Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,1988; Finn and Lamb,1991; Rosen and karwan,1994
	5. Tangibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date and appealing physical facilities and equipments Appearance of personnel Appearance of communication materials 	Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,1988; Finn and Lamb,1991; Rosen and karwan,1994
	6. Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes facilities according to need and wants of customer Includes flexible and comfortable facilities. 	Carvalho and Leite, 1999; Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994
(B) Technical quality	7. Customer perceived network quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator of performance of call network in terms of call/voice quality, drop rate, call network congestion and coverage An indicator of performance of data network in terms of data speed, data quality, data coverage 	Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, European Telecommunications Standards Institute, Naghshinch and Schwartz,1996; Markoulidakis et.al., 2000

In all, 7 dimensions were identified to measure service quality in mobile telephony in cellular industry, which is summarized above.

2. Brand image: The construct brand image was firstly propounded by Gardner & Levy (1955). A good brand image requires vigilant planning, designing and thoughtful long commitment of a company towards its customers which make it unique & different from competitors (Reynolds et.al., 1984). It is the most valued intangible asset of a firm which includes number of beliefs about the brand. Moreover, it is a way how consumer perceives the brand. Brand image building is one of the dominant factors of service marketing which taken the attention of marketing gurus. It is an integral constituent of Brand Equity (Hsieh, 2004) and a key concern of Brand Management (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Brand image has direct and significant impact in enhancing customer satisfaction (Ansir Launtu, 2016). These findings are consistent with the findings of another empirical study which was conducted by

Dr. Muhammad, E. M. et.al. (2012) worked on Pakistan telecommunication sector in finding out the impact of brand, service quality and price on customer satisfaction. . The results of this study revealed the strong positive impact of brand image on customer satisfaction. This study also tried to highlight the significance of superior brand image on increased customer satisfaction and market share. Therefore, it's is clear that brand image play a key role in product's success (Roth, 1995). In addition to these findings, Aaker (1997) strongly recommended that in order to generate huge short term and long term gains, attract new customers and build customer loyalty etc., a firm must work on to build strong brand image (Ogba & Tan, 2009). One more researcher conducted a research in the telecommunication industry in South Sulawesi & revealed same findings like in the previous studies that brand image has significant and direct impact on customer satisfaction but not significantly related with customer loyalty. The study titled "The effect of brand in the telecommunication sector" authored by Gunnvald B. Svendsen et.al. (2013) revealed in the findings that a good brand image makes a company less affected by increasing churn rate caused by low satisfaction of customers. Furthermore, Responses from another study which was conducted by R.C.C Rajpurohit et.al (2011) shown that brand image is the third most important deciding factor in choosing services of telecommunication operators followed by service quality and price. In addition to these findings, the study investigated three top most factors for customer satisfaction and success of business i.e. service quality, price and brand image. Therefore, in the current study, Brand image is taken as an important determinant affecting customer satisfaction. Many researchers also proved that the dimension/ items of brand image, proxied by the dimension of corporate image (Keller, 2003).

3. Customized Plans and Sales Promotional offers:

Suitable customized plans and sales promotional offers are the strategies which not only enhance sales, reduce churn rate, drive hike in ARPU, triumph gainful customers but also lead to customer satisfaction. These marketing strategies i.e. customer friendly tariff selection plans play an important role to promote growth, customer life time value which have direct effect on increase in profits. These strategies are of significant value because of its importance for the telecom operators.

Customized plans are basically offerings which are designed according to the needs and wants of customer. These plans are available across all channels i.e. online, mobile, in- store, and in call centre. Easy availability of call and data packages in various denominations from low to high value is an example of customized plan. Choosing plan according to own desire is possible with the help of SMARTASSISTANT Digital Advice solutions. It helps customer to find out a plan of own choice online. These strategies are adopted by telecom operators because attraction, satisfaction and retention of customer are not an easy job. Therefore, various telecom companies like Airtel, Vodafone etc. pioneered a unique concept "Design your own Plan" which provides flexibility to customers to design a plan of their own choice.

Promotions are major elements of marketing campaigns (Kotler, 2002). It includes pool of different incentive tools (Kotler, 2003) offered by seller to buyer. Sales promotional tools are type of inducement/stimulus other than advertising, personal selling and publicity where seller makes goods more significant by offering extra aids in cash or in kind (George, 1998).

BMSR Group (2010) investigated main tools for sales promotion i.e. price discount/ price off, coupon(printed, e and m coupon), variety of bonus packs, Buy-one-get-one-offer, Buy-two-get-one-free, free premium, gift, vouchers, joint/ tie-in promotion, repeat purchasing discount offer, contests, games, membership programs, cash refunds, free samples etc. Various studies have

showcased the importance of the tools of sales promotion to maximize sales (amount wise), increase sales (units wise), brand equity and profitability (Srinivasan, S.S. et.al., 1998; Palazon et.al., 2005; Montaner, T, et.al., 2008). Sakara, Ahmed et.al. (2014) in their study investigated that promotional incentive is a key element of customer retention in telecommunication industry and has positive influence on purchasing habits of customers. Moreover, the study concluded that if a business wants to enjoy customer satisfaction, customer retention and good profits, it should work hard to increase sales promotional incentives. These findings are consistent with the findings of another empirical study of telecom industry in KPK Pakistan was given by Saima Afsheen (2012). The results of the study revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and independent variable (promotion). Furthermore, raj bahadur sharma, 2014 in his empirical investigation titled “customer satisfaction in telecommunication sector in Saudi Arabia given recommendation of the research. According to him, telecom operators can attract more customers by introducing promotional schemes for most frequent mobile users i.e. students, teenagers and businessmen Therefore, in current study, both customized plans and sales promotional offers are considered as a stimulant to affect customer satisfaction in telecommunication industry.

4. Price/Call and Data charges: In simple words, price is an amount of money a seller charges from the buyer for the benefits and usage of product or service a consumer purchased (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). It's measured in monetary terms and one among the four P's of marketing mix. Philip Kotler coined this term in 4P's of marketing and said that pricing decision is an important element in marketing mix which affects revenue rather than costs. In telecommunication market, price means tariff paid by customer for calls made and data consumed. It includes rentals and charges. It was found that if any telecom company offers lower charges would be able to attract and retain more customers. A good tariff plan gives priceless satisfaction to customer (shahzan khan; Saima Afsheen, 2012) and lead to customer loyalty and satisfaction. Moreover, it act as an important weapon of promotion which confronts competition, increase profits and augment market share. Price is an important and chief determinant affecting choice of telecommunication operators in mobile telephony market (Kollmann, 2010). Ahasanul Haque et.al, 2010 conducted empirical study on 300 Bangladeshi mobile users using Structure Equation Modelling. The study aimed to find out factors affecting choice to choose telecommunication service providers. The findings revealed that price is an important factor chased by service quality, product quality and promotional schemes. Hafeez Shakir et.al (2010) in their study considered satisfaction and retention, the biggest challenge faced by telecom companies. They have developed theoretical framework which establish relationship between customer satisfactions with its driver i.e. price and perceived quality and its outcome i.e. corporate image and corporate loyalty in Pakistan telecommunication industry. Another study authored by Herrmann et.al, 2007 and Imran et.al, 2010 found that price reasonability and customer satisfaction is significantly related with each other. Md. Rahman (2014) in his empirical study revealed that pricing is significant determinant which influence customer satisfaction in telecom industry in Bangladesh. These findings are in consistent with the findings of another study which was conducted by Herrmann et.al. (2007).The results of the study exposed that price perception directly influence customer satisfaction. Furthermore, few researches conducted and revealed two essential determinants of customer satisfaction i.e. Price perception (ching et.al, 2008) and value for money (chittyet et.al, 2007).Moreover, this study throws light on major reasons behind high customer switching cost. Out of all reasons, important one is high, unreliable and unreasonable pricing strategies (Peng &

Wang, 2006). Muzammil Hanif et.al, 2010 in their study revealed two elements i.e. Price fairness and customer service to explain customer satisfaction. Moreover, the study disclosed that price fairness is better element than customer services in satisfying customer. Therefore, it is evident that price is an important and significant factor in customer satisfaction. In the present study, the researcher throws light on the factor price/tariff which includes both call tariff and data tariff.

Conclusion:

After reviewing various works done in telecom sector regarding customer satisfaction, in the current study the researcher identified/ investigated “four specific factors” as the significant factors which influence customer satisfaction.

Factor 1: Service quality (functional quality + technical quality) with modifications

Factor 2: Brand image

Factor 3: Customised plans and sales promotional offers

Factor 4: Price/ call & data charges.

Limitations of the study and the way forward:

This study can be further extended to investigate the casual relationships between service quality, brand image, sales promotional offers, and price with customer satisfaction. Moreover, this conceptual paper did not focus on any establishing any relationships and provide researchers a foundation for further investigations systematically.

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