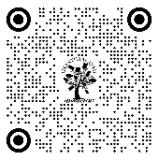


EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS OF MOBILE PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS; AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Service quality has become a critical factor for the competitive advantage of mobile phone service providers in the telecommunication industry. This study explores the key factors influencing service quality in mobile phone service providers and their impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The analysis focuses on dimensions such as network quality, customer support, pricing, service reliability, and value-added services. The research aims to identify how these factors contribute to the overall perception of service quality and determine the most significant determinants of customer satisfaction. The non-probability convenience sampling technique is the most suitable method when it is not possible to obtain information from every member of the sample population. Additionally, the precise population frame of mobile phone service consumers in the study area could not be determined, as the number of users could not be ascertained. The interview schedule was employed to acquire the primary data from the respondents. The data that has been collected is coded and inserted into a primary table. The data are analysed in accordance with the nature of the data and the intent of the analysis (nature of the problem) using the SPSS software. For the purpose of the research, a sample size of 100 respondents is selected from an infinite population. A random sample strategy was used by the researcher in order to choose the objects that would be used for sampling. The findings highlight the need for service providers to continuously adapt and enhance their service offerings to meet evolving customer expectations and maintain competitiveness in a rapidly changing market

Keywords: Service Quality, Mobile Phone Service Providers, Customer Satisfaction, Network Quality, Pricing, Customer Support, Telecommunication Industry

1. INTRODUCTION

In a mobile market that is swiftly evolving, it is challenging to anticipate consumer requirements and develop mobile content services. Individuals encounter challenges in articulating their desires regarding services that are unfamiliar to them. Traditionally, mobile services have been designed to cater to innovators, individuals who are experts in their respective fields, or those who wish to remain informed about new technologies and innovative methods of operation. However, the requirements and desires of consumers are diverse, and content that is appealing to one segment may not be appealing to another. To effectively reach

the majority of customer markets, services must be differentiated and targeted at the appropriate customer segments that utilise mobile content for a specific purpose, thereby creating a perception of value. According to numerous researchers, the most reliable sources for investigating the potential value of services to their consumers are frequent customers and efforts to enhance the quality of services and market new services. Consequently, research is required to enhance comprehension of the expectations of regular consumers regarding services and the current discrepancy between their expectations and the perceived status of various mobile services. Additionally, the current market for mobile services is relatively undifferentiated, with numerous providers offering comparable services. Consequently, consumers are not highly committed to a particular brand or provider and instead utilise the services of multiple providers simultaneously. Consequently, providers are contending with elevated competition and diminished profit margins. Marketing communication plays a critical role in the pursuit of attracting the appropriate consumer segments, which are the most likely to remain regular users of the services in the future. Consequently, their revenue per user increases. A committed, loyal customer base that consistently adheres to the mobile services of a given service provider should be the result of communicating the appropriate value offerings to the appropriate consumers. Furthermore, the perceived value of mobile services is primarily determined by the contentment of the client with the service. In other words, customer satisfaction is a positive emotive and logical state that is derived from the evaluation of the service by the consumer.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Recent trends have significantly influenced the industry, and mobile phone services in India have experienced substantial growth. India has become one of the world's greatest mobile phone markets due to its substantial population and the increasing prevalence of smart phones. The exponential increase in the number of mobile internet consumers in India is one notable trend. More and more individuals are gaining access to the internet through their mobile devices as a result of the availability of affordable data plans and Smartphone. Telecom operators have experienced an increase in revenue as a consequence of the surge in demand for mobile data services. The Indian mobile phone services landscape has been significantly altered by the introduction of Reliance Jio in 2016. Jio revolutionized the market by providing free access to a variety of digital services, unlimited telephony, and low-cost data plans. This action sparked a fierce competition among telecommunications providers, necessitating that they modify their pricing strategies and enhance their service offerings in order to retain their clientele. Ultimately, consumers have benefited from the competitive environment, as they now have access to high-speed data services that are more affordable. The expansion of mobile phone services has also been significantly influenced by the government's initiatives, including Make in India and Digital India. Digital India endeavors to ensure that all citizens have access to digital infrastructure, connectivity, and services, whereas make in India promotes the production of telecommunications apparatus and smart phones within the nation. The mobile phone manufacturing industry in India has experienced growth as a result of the investments that these initiatives have attracted from both domestic and international actors. Furthermore, the expansion of mobile phone services has been facilitated by the emergence of digital payment platforms and e-commerce. Mobile phones have evolved into a gateway for digital transactions, finance, and online

purchasing. This has resulted in a rise in the demand for mobile internet connectivity and services that are both secure and dependable. The proliferation of 4G technology has been a substantial factor in the expansion of mobile phone services. Telecom operators have made substantial investments in network upgrades to ensure that consumers receive 4G services that are both more reliable and quicker. This has facilitated the use of data-intensive applications, including online gaming, social media, and video streaming. It is anticipated that the mobile phone services industry in India will be further revolutionized by the deployment of 5G networks in the future. 5G is anticipated to offer increased bandwidth, reduced latency, and the capacity to connect an enormous number of devices simultaneously. This technology will create new opportunities for mobile-based services, such as advanced healthcare solutions, smart cities, and Internet of Things (IoT) applications. The upcoming deployment of 5G networks, the growth of mobile internet users, intense competition, affordable data plans, government initiatives, the rise of e-commerce and digital payments, and the adoption of 4G technology have all contributed to the recent trends in India's mobile phone services industry. Mobile phones have become an essential component of the daily lives of millions of Indians, as a result of the increased connectivity, improved access to digital services, and improved consumer experiences that have resulted from these trends.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1

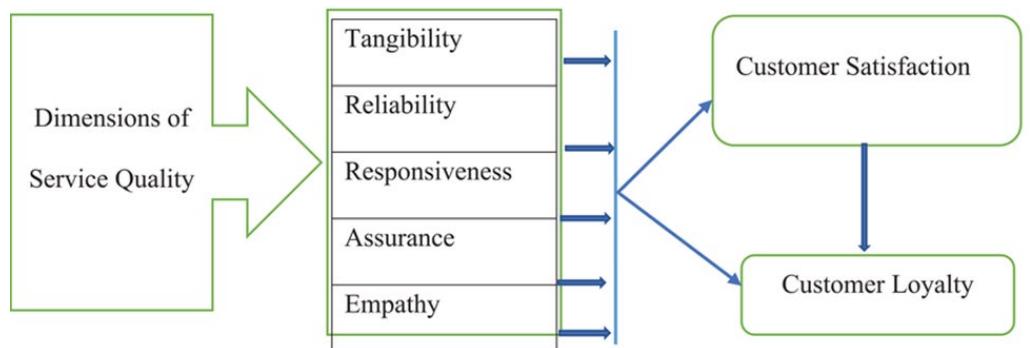


Figure 1 Service Quality Expectations and Perceptions of Telecom Sector

Services marketing innovation is the primary factor driving the development of the mobile market in today's developed markets. The distinctions between mature and developing markets are dissolving, and even emerging nations such as China, India, and Latin America are swiftly transitioning to advanced mobile services. The mobile market's emphasis has shifted from volume to value, and it will be regulated by content-driven service utilization in the future. New technologies are essentially intermediaries that enable consumers to select the service channel through which they wish to communicate with the service provider. Companies that have historically been product- and technology-driven are challenged in their ability to maintain relationships with consumers who initiate and utilise the service through a mobile portable device without engaging with the service provider organization. An attempt has been made to review the related studies conducted in India, as the roles of client and supplier have been inverted as a result of mobility. It is challenging to anticipate client needs and provide mobile content offerings in a mobile industry that is rapidly changing. Individuals struggle to articulate their

preferences for services that are unfamiliar to them. In the past, mobile services have been targeted at innovators, specialists, and individuals who desire to remain informed about new technology and methods of operation. Nevertheless, the desires and aspirations of customers are not uniform, and information that resonates with one segment may not resonate with another. In order to reach the majority of client markets, services must be distinctive and targeted at the appropriate consumer groups that use mobile content for a specific purpose and therefore perceive the service as beneficial. Numerous professionals have contended that frequent customers are the most effective source of information regarding the potential value of new services and the enhancement of service quality. Additionally, the current mobile service market is highly homogeneous, with numerous companies providing services that are similar. Consequently, clients are less loyal to a brand or provider as a result of the concurrent use of multiple providers' services. Consequently, providers are confronted with increased competition and diminished profit margins. Marketing communication is essential in the effort to attract the appropriate client segments, which in turn leads to increased revenue per user by attracting individuals who are most likely to become regular consumers of the services in the future. A dedicated, loyal customer base that utilises a service provider's mobile services on a regular basis should be the outcome of effectively communicating the appropriate value propositions to the appropriate clients. Additionally, consumers' assessments of the value of mobile services are substantially contingent upon their satisfaction with these services. In other terms, customer satisfaction is a favourable emotional and logical state that is the consequence of a customer's evaluation of the service they use.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Siddique, Hussain, and Rehman (2023) concentrated on the investigation of the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the mobile telecommunications sector of Pakistan. The researchers likely employed rigorous research methods to acquire and analyse data relevant to their investigation, as evidenced by their publication in the Journal of Public Affairs. The specific service quality dimensions that substantially influence consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the mobile telecommunication sector of Pakistan are likely to be illuminated by their findings. These dimensions may encompass factors such as network reliability, call quality, customer service responsiveness, pricing transparency, and overall user experience. In order to identify areas for improvement and improve consumer contentment and loyalty, it is essential for mobile telecom providers to comprehend the influence of these service quality dimensions. Providers can enhance their competitive position in the industry and optimise their service offerings by focussing on the specific dimensions that are most important to consumers in the Pakistani market. Saleem et al. (2022) conducted an investigation into the correlation between customer satisfaction, loyalty, and service quality. The researchers likely employed a combination of quantitative research methodologies to acquire and analyse data, as evidenced by their publication in the International Journal of Information Management. Their investigation presumably demonstrated that customer contentment and loyalty within the mobile telecommunications industry are directly influenced by service quality. Furthermore, the investigation presumably discovered that perceived value serves as a mediator in this relationship. This implies that consumers are more inclined to derive greater value from their mobile telecom provider when they perceive a higher level of service quality, which in turn results in increased

satisfaction and loyalty. In order to improve their service offerings and consumer relationships, mobile telecom providers must comprehend the mediating role of perceived value. Providers can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn will drive business success in the competitive telecom industry, by concentrating on providing high-quality services that are perceived as valuable by customers. Tariq and Razzaq (2021) examined the correlations between service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust in Pakistan's mobile telecommunications sector. The researchers likely employed both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to collect and analyse data, as evidenced by the publication in *Cogent Business & Management*. Their results presumably indicated that customer satisfaction and loyalty in the mobile telecommunications sector are directly influenced by service quality. Furthermore, the research presumably demonstrated that trust serves as a mediator in these relationships. This suggests that consumers are more inclined to trust their mobile telecom provider when they perceive improved service quality, which results in increased satisfaction and loyalty. It is imperative for mobile telecom providers to comprehend the mediating function of trust in order to establish and sustain long-term relationships with their consumers. In the competitive telecom market of Pakistan, providers can achieve sustainable business growth by prioritising the improvement of service quality and the establishment of trust, which in turn enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. Ali and Hussain (2020) set out to determine the factors that influence service quality in the mobile telecommunications sector, with a particular emphasis on Pakistan. It is probable that the researchers implemented a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather and analyse data. Their results presumably suggested that there are numerous factors that affect the quality of service in the mobile telecommunications industry. These determinants may encompass a variety of factors, including network coverage, communication quality, internet speed, customer service responsiveness, pricing plans, and service reliability, among others. It is imperative for mobile phone service providers to comprehend these determinants in order to improve the quality of their services and satisfy the changing needs and expectations of their customers. In a highly competitive market, providers have the potential to enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business performance by effectively addressing these factors.

5. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

All organisations recognise the importance of service quality. Service quality and its determinants have been regarded as a strategic instrument by firms, marketing executives, brand managers, and marketing teams to improve the propagation of their services since 1980. By gaining an understanding of the factors that affect service quality, it is possible to enhance marketing strategies by understanding the requirements and behaviours of consumers. The goal of Marketing Research Academicians and Authors is to determine the factors that influence consumers' perceptions of service quality. The quality of service is primarily determined by the perception of consumers. Occasionally, customers are apprehensive about which services to select from the available options. The selection of services is influenced by a variety of factors, including pricing, availability, personnel conduct, store conditions, and overall performance rating. The reputation of organisations is a critical factor in the decision of consumers to select their services.

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope encompasses the regulatory and policy frameworks that govern the mobile telecommunications industry, as well as the emergent trends and innovations that are influencing the sector. This may entail an assessment of regulatory compliance, spectrum allocation, and initiatives that advocate for consumer protection and equitable competition. Insights into the operations and implications for consumers and the broader telecommunications landscape are provided by a comprehensive study of mobile phone service providers, which encompasses a wide range of factors, including technical infrastructure, customer service, pricing, marketing, regulation, and industry dynamics.

7. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Indian telecommunications industry is the fastest-growing sector in the country and is providing services to the nation. The telecommunications sector is characterised by intense competition among companies. The industry, government policy, technology change, customer behavioural change, price reduction, and the globalised market are all subject to various issues. In this situation, telecommunications companies are implementing a variety of programs to both retain and attract their current clientele. In the marketing sector, there are numerous unresolved issues within the industry. The number of mobile phone consumers or customers is expanding rapidly. In India, the majority of individuals are using mobile phones, regardless of their economic, educational, or occupational status. It is exceedingly challenging to comprehend the perspectives and conduct of these individuals. The subsequent enquiries are posed in this context.

7.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With the following objectives in mind, the investigation was conducted:

- 1) To conduct a socio-economic profile survey of the mobile phone service users in the sample.
- 2) To identify how these factors contribute to the overall perception of service quality and determine the most significant determinants of customer satisfaction
- 3) To provide valuable recommendations for enhancing the quality of mobile phone service.

8. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The non-probability convenience sampling technique is the most suitable method when it is not possible to obtain information from every member of the sample population. Additionally, the precise population frame of mobile phone service consumers in the study area could not be determined, as the number of users could not be ascertained. The interview schedule was employed to acquire the primary data from the respondents. The data that has been collected is coded and inserted into a primary table. The data are analysed in accordance with the nature of the data and the intent of the analysis (nature of the problem) using the SPSS software. For the purpose of the research, a sample size of 100 respondents are selected from an infinite population. A random sample strategy was used by the researcher in order to choose the objects that would be used for sampling.

Table 1**Table 1 Factors influencing service Quality of Mobile Phone Service Providers****Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance**

S. No	Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank
1.	Network quality	3.21	1.154	5.32
2.	Customer support	2.75	0.654	6.21
3.	Pricing	2.66	1.249	5.69
4.	Service reliability	3.24	0.658	7.71
5.	Value-added services	2.87	0.742	5.20
6.	User Interface	2.22	1.254	5.34
7.	App selection	3.17	0.578	6.23
8.	Security	2.08	1.210	5.28
9.	Data Speed	3.24	0.874	5.26
No. of Respondents		100	difference	8
Chi-Square		51.112	p	0.000

A test known as Kendall's W is used in order to establish the statistical significance of the rankings that are produced from the mean ranks. With eight degrees of freedom, the Chi-Square test yields a calculated value of 51.112 for the computed value. It is statistically significant that the p value is 0.000 when the significance level is being used. Customer support is a pivotal component of service quality for mobile phone service providers. It encompasses the assistance and services provided to customers before, during, and after the purchase of a mobile service. Effective customer support includes timely responses to inquiries, resolution of issues, and overall customer care that enhances the user experience. High-quality customer support not only addresses technical problems but also provides clear guidance on service features, billing issues, and other concerns. This dimension of service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, as prompt and efficient support can mitigate negative experiences and foster customer loyalty. In contrast, poor customer support can lead to dissatisfaction, negative word-of-mouth, and a higher likelihood of churn. Therefore, investing in skilled support staff, robust training programs, and advanced support technologies is crucial for mobile phone service providers aiming to improve their service quality and maintain a competitive edge. Network quality is a fundamental determinant of customer satisfaction for mobile phone service providers. It encompasses the reliability, coverage, and speed of the network infrastructure, which directly impacts the user experience. High network quality ensures seamless connectivity, minimal dropped calls, and fast data transfer rates, contributing significantly to customer contentment. Consistent network performance allows users to access services without interruptions or delays, which is crucial in today's fast-paced digital environment. On the other hand, poor network quality, characterized by weak signals, frequent outages, or slow data speeds, can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. Service providers must continually invest in network upgrades, maintenance, and expansion to enhance their coverage and capacity, ensuring they meet the evolving demands of their customers. By prioritizing network quality, providers can enhance customer satisfaction, build loyalty, and gain a competitive advantage in the telecommunications market.

9. DISCUSSION

Service reliability and value-added services are crucial elements influencing the overall quality perceived by customers of mobile phone service providers. Service reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the core mobile services, including uninterrupted network access, consistent data speeds, and dependable call quality. Reliable service minimizes disruptions and ensures that users can trust the provider to meet their connectivity needs. Value-added services, on the other hand, encompass additional features and benefits that enhance the basic mobile service offering. These may include premium customer support, exclusive content, loyalty programs, and advanced applications like cloud storage or security features. Value-added services not only differentiate providers in a competitive market but also offer customers more reasons to remain with their current provider. When service reliability is high and value-added services are effectively integrated, customers are more likely to experience greater satisfaction and loyalty. Providers that excel in these areas demonstrate a commitment to delivering exceptional service and continuously enhancing their offerings to meet customer expectations.

10. IMPLICATIONS

The implications of service quality in mobile phone service provision are far-reaching and multifaceted. High service quality, characterized by reliable network performance, effective customer support, and compelling value-added services, directly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. Providers that excel in these areas are likely to experience increased customer retention, positive word-of-mouth, and a stronger competitive position in the market. Conversely, deficiencies in service quality can lead to customer dissatisfaction, higher churn rates, and a tarnished brand reputation. Addressing issues such as poor network reliability or inadequate customer support is crucial for mitigating negative impacts and retaining customers. Moreover, integrating value-added services can differentiate a provider from competitors and create additional revenue streams. The focus on enhancing service quality is not just about meeting current customer expectations but also about anticipating future needs and adapting to technological advancements. Mobile phone service providers must continuously evaluate and improve their service offerings to maintain customer trust and achieve long-term success in a dynamic industry.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Invest in upgrading and expanding network infrastructure to improve coverage, reliability, and data speeds. Regular maintenance and technology updates are essential to minimize disruptions and ensure consistent service quality.
- 2) Develop comprehensive training programs for customer support staff to enhance their problem-solving skills and product knowledge. Implement advanced support technologies, such as AI-driven chatbots and automated ticketing systems, to provide timely and efficient assistance.
- 3) Introduce and promote value-added services that offer additional benefits beyond basic mobile plans. Consider services such as premium

content access, cloud storage solutions, and enhanced security features to differentiate your offerings and add value for customers.

- 4) Establish robust channels for collecting and analyzing customer feedback. Regularly review customer satisfaction surveys, social media comments, and support interactions to identify areas for improvement and address customer concerns proactively.

12. CONCLUSION

In the highly competitive landscape of mobile phone service provision, service quality stands as a critical determinant of customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. This study has explored the multifaceted dimensions of service quality, including network reliability, customer support, and value-added services, and their profound impact on customer experiences. The findings underscore the necessity for mobile service providers to prioritize and continually enhance these aspects to maintain a competitive edge and meet evolving customer expectations. Network reliability is the cornerstone of service quality in the telecommunications sector. Customers demand uninterrupted connectivity and fast data speeds as fundamental prerequisites for their mobile service experience. The ability to deliver consistent and reliable network performance not only prevents customer frustration but also reinforces trust in the provider's capabilities. Service providers must invest in state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure to ensure broad coverage, high-speed connectivity, and minimal disruptions. Regular upgrades and maintenance are essential to address any emerging issues and to keep pace with the increasing demands of a data-driven world. Customer support plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall perception of service quality. Effective support goes beyond merely resolving technical issues; it encompasses proactive assistance, clear communication, and empathetic service. Providers that excel in customer support demonstrate a commitment to addressing customer concerns promptly and effectively, which can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty. Investing in well-trained support staff, leveraging advanced support tools, and creating multiple channels for customer interaction are crucial strategies for improving support services. Value-added services provide an additional layer of differentiation in a crowded market. These services, which may include exclusive content, premium features, or loyalty rewards, offer customers tangible benefits beyond basic mobile connectivity. By integrating innovative and valuable services into their offerings, providers can not only attract new customers but also retain existing ones. Value-added services contribute to a more personalized and enriched customer experience, reinforcing the provider's commitment to meeting diverse customer needs and preferences. The implications of service quality are significant and multifaceted. High-quality service leads to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive brand perception, which are essential for sustained business success. Conversely, deficiencies in service quality can result in customer churn, negative reviews, and a weakened competitive position. Therefore, mobile service providers must adopt a proactive approach to service quality, continuously evaluating and refining their strategies to address customer needs and expectations effectively. To this end, the recommendations provided offer actionable insights for improving service quality. By focusing on network infrastructure, enhancing customer support, expanding value-added services, and leveraging customer feedback, providers can address current challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth. Personalization, transparency, and regular performance monitoring are also critical elements that contribute to a superior customer experience. The pursuit

of high service quality is an ongoing endeavor that requires dedication, innovation, and adaptability. Mobile phone service providers that excel in delivering reliable, supportive, and value-driven services are well-positioned to achieve long-term success and customer loyalty. As the telecommunications industry continues to evolve, maintaining a customer-centric approach and investing in service excellence will be key to thriving in an increasingly competitive market.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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