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SUBSCRIBER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE IN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TUTICORIN CITY

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ABSTRACT

Customer care service is an important service, especially in the mobile telecommunication sector. Because most of the time people want to know about their balance, call tariff, rate cutter, new offers, activation and deactivation, billing details and so on. Therefore customer care service is considered as a significant one. Sometimes, due poor customer care service, some customer may switch over from their service provider to other new service provider. Here, the research is going to analyse whether the service representatives are giving percept service to the society or not and also whether the subscribers are satisfied with their mobile telecommunication operator with special reference to Tuticorin city.

KEYWORDS

Customer care, Customer, service, Service quality, & Subscriber's Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. According to Turban et al. (2002), "Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation." The importance of customer service may vary by product or service, industry and customer. The perception of success of such interactions will be dependent on employees "who can adjust themselves to the personality of the guest," according to Micah Solomon. From the point of view of an overall sales process engineering effort, customer service plays an important role in an organization's ability to generate income and revenue. From that perspective, customer service should be included as part of an overall approach to systematic improvement. A customer service experience can change the entire perception a customer has of the organization.

Some have argued that the quality and level of customer service has decreased in recent years, and that this can be attributed to a lack of support or understanding at the executive and middle management levels of a corporation and/or a customer service policy. To address this argument, many organizations have employed a variety of methods to improve their customer satisfaction levels, and other key performance indicators (KPIs).

The mobile telephone network has aggrandized greatly since 2000. The number of mobile phone connections crossed fixed-line connections in Sept 2004 and currently there are an estimated 929.37 million mobile phone users in India compared to 31.53 million fixed line subscribers. India primarily follows the GSM mobile system, in the 900 MHz band. Recent operators also operate in the 1800 MHz band. The dominant players are Aircel, Vodafone, Airtel, Tata Indicom, Tata Teleservices, MTS, Uninor, Reliance Infocomm, Idea Cellular and BSNL/MTNL. There are many smaller players, with operations in only a few states. International roaming agreements exist between most operators and many foreign carriers. India has the fastest growing telecom network in the world with its high population and development potential. However, rural India still lacks strong infrastructure. India's public sector telecom company BSNL is the 7th largest telecom company in world.

Telephony introduced in India in 1882. The total number of telephones in the country stands at 960.9 million, while the overall teledensity has increased to 79.28% as of May 31, 2012. and the total numbers of mobile phone subscribers have reached 929.37 million as of May 2012. The mobile tele-density has increased to 76.68% in May 2012. In the wireless segment, 8.35 million subscribers were added in May 2012. The wire line segment subscriber base stood at 31.53 million.

Indian telecom operators added a staggering 227.27 million wireless subscribers in the 12 months between Mar 2010 and Mar 2011 averaging at 18.94 million subscribers every month. To put this into perspective, China which currently possesses the world's largest telecommunications network added 119.2 million wireless subscribers during the same period (March 2010 - March 2011) - averaging 9.93 million subscribers every month (a little over half the number India was adding every month). So, while India might currently be second to China in the TOTAL number of mobile subscribers, India has been adding nearly twice as many subscribers EVERY month until March 2011. Mobile teledensity increased by almost 18.4 percentage points from Mar 2010 and Mar 2011 (49.60% to 67.98%) while wire line subscriber numbers fell by a modest 2.2 million. This frenetic pace of monthly subscriber additions means that the Indian mobile subscriber base has shown a year on year growth of 43.23%. According to recent reports, India was purported to overtake China to become the world's largest mobile telecommunications market by the year 2013. It was also predicted that by 2013, the teledensity will shoot up to 75% and the total mobile subscriber base would be a colossal 1.159 billion.

OBJECTIVES

1. To know about need of customer care service.
2. To find out the quality of customer care service in mobile telecommunication sector.
3. To analyse customer perception regarding customer care service.
4. To study the factors affecting customer care service quality.
5. To ascertain the level of satisfaction and give suggestion to the mobile service providers for offering better service to their customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

According to Cohen and Moore (2000), CRM is concentrated on the use of information technology so as to aid the organization to stay abreast of its customers' needs and concerns. Customer Relationship Management also helps the organization to respond in time and appropriately to their customers' calls. On the other hand, Jarre (2000) stated that Customer Relationship Management is a business strategy and process issue that involves several other strategies other than the application of technology. The approach on CRM covers all business processes that an organization employs so as to determine, select, obtain, enhance and retain its customers. Indeed, at present, CRM is regarded as the integration of business processes, technological solutions and advanced analysis, which enables

companies to understand clients from a multifaceted perspective. Through this understanding, companies are able to establish deeper and more profitable customer relations (Zabin, 2004).

The CRM strategy may be thought as a new development in business and management, when in fact, it has been around since time immemorial. There may be variations of the old concept in comparison to the present time. However, the objective remains the same. Before, CRM is applied in businesses through personal interactions. For instance, a shop owner in the past would know all his customers by name, their lifestyles, hobbies, occupations and buying preferences. When needed, all these information are stored and readily accessible for the shop owner to use (Zabin, 2004). Nowadays, this may not be very much applicable to modern companies. As an alternative, companies now depend on go-betweens to establish the connection for them. These come in the form of marketing vehicles, which act as a go-between communication flows, and contact management channels to intercede service and support flows. No matter how varied people define Customer Relationship Management, its main rationale remains the same, and that is the application of strategies to improve customer relations.

It may appear to be a simple management task. On the contrary, the implementation of CRM requires several factors. For instance, this strategy requires that an organization see customer relations as a means to recognize the needs and wants of its customers. The organization must successfully create, satisfy and sustain its clients while concurrently helping in the attainment of its objectives (Greco and Ragins, 2003). In order to come up with customized solutions geared towards the enhancement of customer functionality as well as to the recognition of new customer functionalities, customer intimacy and partnering are required. In turn, networking of customer relationships, which involves channel members, end users, advertising agencies, research firms are established and require management. In general, three important things must be incorporated to a CRM program. These include how to identify individual customers, how to gain relevant knowledge about individual customers and how to cross-sell to each individual customers in a real-time and context-sensitive manner (Zabin, 2004).

Aside from this challenge, the implementation of CRM also requires the organization to view this strategy holistically. This means that CRM should be assimilated well to all the processes within the organization, from marketing to collections. This is said to be a challenge as most companies employing CRM have this tendency to view this strategy narrowly, seeing it as a mere tactical series of transactions. In contrast, the effective strategic implementation of CRM needs information from all related departments for the purpose of using customer information intelligently that will eventually lead to the creation of strong customer partnerships or relations (Butler, 2000). Furthermore, the consistency of the response from different customer points of contact with the company must also be addressed as a possible challenge. For instance, online customers can acquire immediate response to their applications, questions and suggestions. However, this may not be true for customers who have contacted the company using a different channel such as the telephone or a traditional retail outlet (Butler, 2000). Upon the company's realizations on what it actually needs, several CRM strategies can be employed. Weiss (1999) suggests that personalization and online interactivity can be used to help build emotional connections with stakeholders in ways that no other medium can. Forrest and Mizerski (1996) maintain that the highest use of the Internet among businesses has been as a listening medium. The World Wide Web has progressed into a medium with various generic relationships -building attributes (Weiss, 1999). The higher the quality of the data a company can obtain about its customers, and the more comprehensive the data is, the more the organization will be able to use decision analysis to predict customer behavior (Butler, 2000). More targeted and customized relationship strategies can result from better predictions of customer needs. Online CRM can enhance the importance of the relationship for both customers and the e-business. Customers can receive more products and communications that are more suitable to their needs and lifestyles, and the e-business can benefit from a group of high-value repeat customers.

In spite of the many considerations that management has to make in order to effectively implement CRM into its operations, several others are trying to work on employing such strategy. This is due to the fact that intimate customer relationships provide the marketer several advantages. One of which is the establishment of committed customers. Committed customers are more than simple repeat purchasers as they have an emotional connection to the seller (Dick & Basu, 1994; Lim & Razzaque, 1997). These emotions may come in the form of trust, liking and believing in the organization's capability to respond instantly and effectively to a customer's concern (Fournier, 1998). The company considers committed customers as its assets as they can possibly be a source of favourable word-of-mouth referrals. These customers are more resistant to competitors' offers. Aside from this effect, CRM provide a point of leverage to realize economies of scope. Committed customers are often amenable to line extensions (Bejou & Palmer, 1998). Leveraging the customer base can facilitate cross-selling complementary products as well as selling up to higher quality substitutes. The ability of CRM to reduce costs has been explored as well in the recent years. When CRM is applied along with other work processes, the strategy is capable of reducing churn or turnover in a company's customer base. Thus, better customer management can lead to lower sales and service costs, higher buyer retention and lower customer replacement expenditures (Reichheld, 1996). Sanjeev Panandikaret al., (2000) made a "comparative study on service of cellular operators: An approach of multidimensional profile analysis". They summarized the multivariate analysis was carried out in order to compare the cellular operators on the satisfaction levels of key quality elements. They would give the cellular operators performance on the key service quality elements. Sigma scaling is used to get more accurate values of the consumer's perception. Francis Sudhakar, et al., (May 2000) made a "study of consumer behavior in BPL mobile cellular Ltd". They found that consumers were aware more about prepaid card. Present day consumers gave more importance to collect information about product category, and brand before making through advertisement. Selvaraj (et al.), (2000) A study on consumer behaviour towards cell phones users in Tutticorin city", their major findings were that the majority of the respondents who use cell phone are male. They also pointed out that the existing customers are satisfied with the cellular service and is having good prospective customers for cellular services.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Creates customer satisfaction and loyalty through effective and timely resolution of a variety of customer inquiries.
2. Provides support for new data products and service initiatives.
3. Increases revenue via execution of various sales initiatives.
4. Successfully completes Advanced Care training and additional training to focus on specific areas as required.
5. Delivers one-contact resolution of customer issues.
6. Uses automated Knowledge system, as well as any training tools provided to deliver exceptional service to meet T-Mobile's productivity and quality standards.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Customer care service has very significant role in making customer satisfaction. Customer care service is starting after the sale process over. It is used to make a customer as a loyal customer to our company. It asks the people regarding the problems of our product and grievances of our customer and tries to fulfill them as much as possible. Thus customer will get satisfaction. As a result of that, they will be the loyal customer to the particular service provider. But, actually many of the grievances of the mobile customer are not rectified by the customer care service. It makes dissatisfaction on mobile operator. Therefore, customer may want to switch over from that mobile operator. That is why this study is going to study about effectiveness of customer care service.

HYPOTHESIS

- 1) H₀: People do not contact customer care mostly for activation and deactivation of the service
- 2) H₀: - Aircel is not the best service provider of customer care service.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data: Here, the primary data as well as secondary data are used.

Data Collection: The data were collected through well structured questionnaire in the random manner. There were 100 respondents selected for this study.

Scope of study: It is covered only Tuticorin city only.

Tools of study: The chi-square was used for analysis purpose.

LIMITATIONS

- 1) It is covered only some leading companies only
- 2) It is made on the basis of selected customer’s opinion.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

On the basis of the research data, the following analysis have been done and found some important facts.

MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS

TABLE 1

Brand	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aircel	38	38%
Airtel	29	29%
Vodafone	21	21%
BSNL	12	12%

In this research, 40% respondents belong to Aircel, 32 respondents belong to Airtel, 16 respondents belong to Vodafone and 12 respondents belong to BSNL service provider.

MODE OF PLAN

TABLE 2

Mode of Plan	Respondents	Percentage
Pre paid	91	91%
Post paid	9	09%

Pre paid mode is most preferred by the mobile subscribers, because here there are 91% subscribers have pre paid mode and the balance 9% customer only have post paid mode.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTING CUSTOMER CARE

H0:- customer do not contact customer care mostly for activation and deactivation of the service

H1:- Customer contact customer care mostly for activation and deactivation of the service

PURPOSE OF CONTACTING CUSTOMER CARE

TABLE 3

Brands	Regarding Payments	Details about VASs service	Activation/deactivation	Tower Problem	Expected Values
Aircel	2	7	9	1	25
Airtel	3	9	10	4	25
Vodafone	2	6	16	1	25
BSNL	3	6	11	10	25

Chi square value: 9.351 Table value: 7.815

Interpretation of Chi: - As the 95% level of confidence Chi square value 9.351 is more than the table value 7.815, so the null hypothesis is rejected, it means that customer contact customer care mostly for activation and deactivation service.

From the above data analysis it has been found that most of the users of telecommunication contact to their customers care for activation and deactivation of various services. Then they also contact for information about various value added services provider by companies like validity, call rates, SMS pack, caller tones etc. Tower (Network) service has been found a problem of mainly BSNL users and to some extent of Airtel users as well.

Aircel Subscribers’ satisfaction towards customer care service

H0: - Aircel is not the best service provider of customer care service.

H1: - Aircel is the best service provider of customer care service.

AIRCEL SUBSCRIBERS’ SATISFACTION TOWARDS CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

TABLE 4

Brands	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Natural	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
Aircel	12	8			
Airtel	2	9	7	4	6
Vodafone	4	11	2	1	
BSNL		3	2	9	20

Table value: 9.488 & Chi square value 11.143

Interpretation of Chi: - As the 95% level of confidence Chi square value 10.143 is more than the table value 9.488, so the null hypothesis is rejected, it means Aircel is the best service provider of customer care service in the mobile telecommunication sector.

From the above data interpretation we can conclude that Aircel is the best service provider of customer care service in this study area. The Vodafone and Airtel service are also satisfactory as most of the users have rated it as satisfied service provider. But BSNL is to be found as a not satisfactory service provider. Most of the users said that they have not talk to their customer care service provider even for a single time.

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE WAS VERY COURTEOUS

TABLE 5

Brands	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Aircel	14	7			
Airtel	12	9			
Vodafone	9	12	2		
BSNL	1	2	12	6	14

Above data analysis shows that most of the users of all companies found their customer service provider courteous. But the result of BSNL is not good as the users say that they have not talk to their customer care service provider even for a single time. Some of them have talk but after a lot of waiting time. So BSNL customers are found not satisfied with their customer care representatives. Because, BSNL customer care representatives are not courteous.

SATISFACTION WITH THE PROCESS OF GETTING YOUR QUERIES RESOLVED

TABLE 6

Brands	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Highly Unsatisfied
Aircel	14	16	1		
Airtel	4	10	3		
Vodafone	3	6	7	3	1
BSNL		3	5	9	15

From above data analysis we can say that most of the users, who are satisfied with their customer care service, are also satisfied with the process of getting their queries resolved. Aircel has the first place in getting queries resolved, Followed by Airtel and Vodafone. BSNL has very poor service here also.

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE WAS VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE

TABLE 7

Brands	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Aircel	19	5	1		
Airtel	14	1	3		
Vodafone	10	7	6		
BSNL	6	4	8	6	10

Above data analysis shows that most of the customers of all service providers found their customer service provider knowledgeable. But the result of BSNL is again not good as the users say that they have not talk to their customer care service provider even for a single time. Some of them have talk but after a lot of waiting time. So they are found not satisfied.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

TABLE 8

Brands	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Highly Unsatisfied
Aircel	4	16	2	1	
Airtel	2	11	6	2	
Vodafone	3	9	8	2	
BSNL		6	8	11	9

As per the above table, we can say that Aircel customer has satisfied with their service representatives followed by Airtel .Vodafone customer has low satisfaction toward their service representatives. Due to very poor service of customer service representatives, BSNL customer has very low satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this research, it has come to know that customer care has very significant role in satisfaction of customer's needs and wants, especially mobile telecommunication. Since Customer care service is an after sale service, it has vital roll in the area of retaining the customer. If the customer care does not satisfy the customer needs and grievance then the customer will get dissatisfaction. This will automatically create a mind set to switch over from the current operator to other operators. Customer is the king of the market, so we have to retain our existing customer. For that purpose, the organization should strength their policy and services in a well versed manner. Because getting new customer is more expensive and also risky one than retaining the existing customer.

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