



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY TOWARDS AIRCEL PRE AND POST PAID CUSTOMERS IN TAMILNADU WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUCHIRAPPALLI CITY

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ABSTRACT

India has emerged as one of the youngest and fastest growing economies in the world today. One of the sectors that has shown the signs of profitability and contributed significantly to the country's economy is the telecom industry. In fact, the Indian telecom market has gained recognition as one of the most lucrative markets globally. India is one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets in the world and due to this; many foreign companies are thronging India to make their presence in the growing telecom sector in India. The Top 10 Telecom Companies in India: Bharti Airtel, BSNL, Vodafone Essar, Reliance, Idea Cellular, Tata Communications, Tata Teleservices, Aircel, MTNL and TTML. The telecommunication sector in India has recorded several folds of growth in the recent years. This industry is taken to a higher lead due to the private and government sector players in this industry and the companies in this industry are also making their share in the job market in India by offering a wide range of employment opportunities both under technical and under non-technical sector as well. The article focuses on the customer satisfaction and loyalty on Aircel connections in Tiruchirappalli City. The main focus of the study is to understand the customer satisfaction of the customers, to know the value & service of the Aircel, to find the loyalty of the customers and to make suggestions based on the findings of the study. This study was conducted in Tiruchirappalli City wherein 400 customers' opinions were taken for analysis. The tools adopted for this study was an interview schedule. Looking into the major finding it is revealed that 26 percent of the respondents opinion feels to be neutral towards customer satisfaction with regard to post paid connection and 28 percent feel to be somewhat satisfied with regard to pre paid connection. It also found that 28 percent of the respondents' customer loyalty is due to service quality of the connection in view of post paid and 30 of the respondents customer loyalty is due to emotional attachment of the connection in view of prepaid. The mobile entertainment industry in India is witnessing significant growth and a latest research forecasts this market to reach \$4.9 billion in 2015 from \$1.2 billion in 2009, growing at a CAGR of 26% in the period 2009-2015. India's GSM subscriber base grew by 2.72 percent in February with the addition of 14.7 million mobile phone users. The total number of GSM subscribers in the country crossed 555 million as against 540.37 million in January, according to the data released by Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). India's mobile boom may be exaggerated if one takes into account the large number of mobile connections that are currently inactive. Of the 771 million mobile subscribers reported by mobile operators at the end of January, only about 549 million were active subscribers, according to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

KEYWORDS

Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Emotional attachment, Service Quality.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian telecom is the world's fastest growing sector with 791.38 million mobile phone subscribers. As the fastest growing sector in the world India will have 1.159 billion mobile subscribers in 2013. It is the second largest network in the world in terms of wireless connections after China. The sector in India will exceed the total subscriber count in the China and expected to reach a size of ₹344.921 crore by 2012. The industry has witnessed consistent growth during the last year on the back of rollout of newer circles by operators, successful auction of third-generation (3G) and broadband wireless access (BWA) spectrum, network rollout in semi-rural areas and increased focus on the value added services (VAS) market. As per a report, 'India Telecom 2010' released by KPMG in December 2010, currently, the VAS market is worth US\$ 2.45 billion-US\$ 2.67 billion, which is around 10 per cent of the total revenue of the wireless industry. The share of VAS in wireless revenue is likely to increase to 12-13 per cent by 2011. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has liberalised the investment norms for Indian telecom companies by allowing them to invest in international submarine cable consortia through the automatic route. As a measure of further liberalisation, it has now been decided... to allow Indian companies to participate in a consortium with other international operators to construct and maintain submarine cable systems on co-ownership basis under the automatic route. The Indian telecom industry manufactures a vast range of telecom equipment using state-of-the-art technology. As per a press release by the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, the production of telecom equipments in value terms is expected to increase from US\$ 10.87 billion during 2008-09 to US\$ 11.87 billion in 2010-2011. The Indian telecom sector continues to grow at a breakneck speed. Needless to point out over here, that idle funds always chase growth sectors where the prospects of gaining superior returns are far out-weighted. This wave of optimism is also being echoed by a Boston Consulting Group report which says that the Indian telecom market will surpass a psychological \$100 billion-mark by 2015, despite host of concerning factors such as intense competition on the back of low-tariff structures and ensuing decline in ARPU in the sector.

ABOUT AIRCEL

Aircel group is a mobile phone service provider in India. It offers both prepaid and postpaid GSM cellular phone coverage throughout India. Aircel is a joint venture between Maxis Communications of Malaysia and Apollo Hospital Enterprise Ltd of India. UTSB has a 74% stake in Aircel and the remaining 26% is with Apollo Hospitals. It is India's Seventh largest GSM mobile service provider with a subscriber base of over 51.83 million, as of January 31, 2011. It has a market share of 6.72% among the GSM operators in the country. As on date, Aircel is present in all 23 telecom circles (including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar & Jharkhand, Chennai, Delhi & NCR, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Kolkata, Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai, North East, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Rest of Maharashtra & Goa, Rest of Tamil Nadu, Rest of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh East, Uttar Pradesh West) as per the company plans it has become a pan-India operator. Additionally, Aircel has also obtained permission from Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to provide International Long Distance (ILD) and National Long Distance (NLD) telephony services. It also has the largest service in Tamil Nadu.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

It has been argued and is often assumed that the financial performance of service organisations relies on the generation of high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Heskett et al, 1994, Rucci et al, 1998, Reichheld and Markey, 2000, Vandermerwe, 2000, Fredericks, 2001, Reichheld, 2004). The techniques developed by Telecom New Zealand where first the component factors that most influence the overall satisfaction rating of Telecom's service are found. Second, these components are quantified and the improvement required for each component to meet overall excellence targets is determined. This study gives a successful example of International Directory Assistance which shows that these techniques have significantly raised customer overall satisfaction in just five months (Peter J. Danaher, 1967). A study was conducted to study the factors that influence customer loyalty of BSNL mobile customers. The samples were collected from 100 consumers who have BSNL mobile services in Jaipur city. BSNL being the pioneer in mobile sector still have a strong customer base, but over the past few years a steady thinning is happening in the customer base. The paper investigates the reasons behind the hard core customer loyalty even in an

environment with high quality alternatives. The results indicated that network quality, customer service along with value added services provided by BSNL enhanced the loyalty of the customers. It is recommended that the BSNL mobile services enterprises should work on its problems related to servers. This will further strengthen the customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings indicate that telecommunication service providers should look beyond price wars to keep their customers satisfied and loyal. The paper is an attempt to analyze the variables that influence the perception of the mobile phone users to remain loyal to their existing service providers that is, why they are loyal to the company (Jessy John, 2010). Telecom market is one of the most competitive, dynamic and fiercely battled arena worldwide and India is no exception to it. A lot of money is being spent on technologies to stop the defection and churn; still marketers have an extremely important role in creating and retaining loyal set of customers. The new competitive landscape is characterised by increased complexity and dynamism. Traditionally, customer satisfaction has been understood to be the key to have loyal set of customers. However, there are several variables apart from the customer satisfaction which directly or indirectly affect the brand loyalty. This study aims at identifying the variables other than customer satisfaction to arrive at a testable model. The relationship between the identified constructs is analysed by using structural equation modelling to unearth these complex relationships. The results provide important insights for creating brand loyalty for practitioners as well as implications to stimulate the future research in this exciting battle ground (Kanwal Kapil, Sheeba Kapil, 2010).

As the current market place becomes more competitive, consumers tend to become more and more demanding. Mobile telecommunication service sector in India has been experiencing the highest growth rate in terms of subscribers and revenues. With the increasing competition in cellular services, the consumers are demanding more. The main condition for protecting the subscriber base is to win customer loyalty. This study attempts to examine the effect of switching cost, service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in the mobile telecommunication services. As many as 220 users of GSM services were surveyed in two cities in India. The data was analyzed by regression analysis. The study shows that the switching cost, service quality and customer satisfaction have positive association with customer loyalty. However, the customer satisfaction was found to be the best predictor of customer loyalty (Chadha, S.K. & Deepa Kapoor). The long term success of organizations depends on many factors. The service sector organizations need to strive through service quality. These organizations try to satisfy customers by providing best quality services. The following study examines the service quality of the mobile service providers and satisfaction of the customers with this quality. The study focuses only the SMS service provided by telecom organizations. Service quality is measured using 5 dimensions and its relationship is determined with customer satisfaction. The data was collected from 331 youngsters who use the SMS service of any company. Correlation and regression analysis are used to analyze the data. Results and discussions are presented (Ishfaq Ahmed, Muhammad Musarrat Nawaz et. al, 2010). Switching cost is one of the most discussed contemporary issues in marketing in attempt to explain consumer behaviour. The present research studied switching cost and its relationships with customer retention, loyalty and satisfaction in the Nigerian telecommunication market. Based on questionnaire administered to customers in the mobile telecommunication industry; the study finds that customer satisfaction positively affects customer retention and that switching cost affects significantly the level of customer retention. However, the effect of switching barriers on retention is only significant when customers consider to exit (Joseph Omotayo Oyeniyi, Joachim Abolaji Abiodun, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

1. To study and understand the customer satisfaction of the Aircel customers.
2. To find the loyalty of the customers
3. To make suggestions based on the findings of the study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Although at first sight, customer satisfaction seems easy to understand, it can actually be difficult to define and sometimes even more difficult to measure. This article presents a general, pragmatic approach to customer satisfaction, including tips and recommendations to help contact center professionals implement a brand new initiative or improve an existing program. A cooperative has to be able to communicate with their customers in order to guarantee customer satisfaction. The easiest way to find out what the company is doing "right" and what the company is doing "wrong" according to their customer. Customer loyalty also can seem elusive and magical to those trying to obtain it. However, there are a lot of good reasons for businesses to pursue customer loyalty as a strategic objective. Customers are expensive to acquire; keeping them loyal allows you to amortize those costs. Loyal customers are often willing to pay premium prices. Loyal customers can be your most effective marketing weapons, evangelizing for product on your behalf. Having this in mind this research was conducted limiting itself to Aircel customers of post and pre paid connection by analyzing the customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study is confined to Tiruchirappalli city.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study is Descriptive Research. This research is undertaken with an idea to assess the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty and factors affecting customer satisfaction. The main aim of such a design is to ensure that the required data are collected objectively, accurately and economically.

DATA COLLECTION

- PRIMARY DATA : Data regarding the topic is collected directly by interacting with the customers by interview method.
- SECONDARY DATA : The secondary data was collected from the existing data sources, company records, internet and World Wide Web.

SAMPLE SIZE

The scope of the study was limited to customers of Aircel connections. The number of respondents for the study was 400.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED IN STUDY

Here weighted average and percentage method is used for analysis and interpretations of the collected data. These are cases where the relative importance of the difference items is not the same. When this so, the research can use the weighted average mean same. The weight stands for the relative importance of the different items.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

TABLE NO: 01: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR AGE

S. No	Age	Postpaid respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid respondent	Prepaid %
1	21 to 25yrs	16	08	48	24
2	26 to 30yrs	36	18	52	26
3	31 to 35yrs	52	26	36	18
4	36 to 40yrs	56	28	28	14
5	41& above	40	20	36	18
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 01 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 28 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 36-40 yrs, 26 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 31-35 yrs, 20 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 41& above yrs, 18 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 26-30 yrs and 8 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 21-25yrs. From table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid) 26 percent of respondents

belong to the age group of 26-30 yrs, 24 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 21-25 yrs, 18 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 31-35 and 41& above yrs and 14 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 36-40 yrs.

TABLE NO: 02: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

S. No	Satisfaction Level	Postpaid respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid respondent	Prepaid %
1	Highly satisfied	28	14	40	20
2	Satisfied	40	20	56	28
3	Neutral	52	26	48	24
4	Unsatisfied	44	22	32	16
5	Highly dissatisfied	36	18	24	12
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 02 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 26 percent of respondents perceive neutral, 22 percent of respondents are unsatisfied, 20 percent of respondents feel satisfied, 18 percent of respondents perceive highly dissatisfied, 14 percent of respondents feel highly satisfied. From above table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid), 28 percent of respondents are satisfied, 24 percent of respondents perceive neutral, 20 Percent of respondents are highly satisfied, 16 percent of respondents are unsatisfied and 12 percent of respondents are highly dissatisfied with regard to the satisfaction level perceived by them.

TABLE NO: 03: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR RATING TOWARDS CUSTOMER SERVICE

S. No	Particulars	Postpaid Respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid respondent	Prepaid %
1	Highly dissatisfied	20	10	24	12
2	Unsatisfied	44	22	63	18
3	Neutral	48	24	60	30
4	Satisfied	60	30	84	24
5	Highly Satisfied	28	14	32	16
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 03 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 30 percent of the respondents rated the customer service as satisfied, 24 percent of the respondents rated the customer service neutral. 22 percent of the respondents rated the customer service unsatisfied, 14 percent of the respondents rated customer service highly satisfied and 10 percent of the respondents rated the customer service highly dissatisfied. From above table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid), 30 Percent of the respondents rated the customer service neutral, 24 percent of the respondents have rated the customer service as satisfied, 18 percent of the respondents rated the customer service unsatisfied, 16 percent of the respondents rated the customer service highly satisfied and 12 percent of the respondents rated the customer service highly dissatisfied.

TABLE NO: 04: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS AFTER PURCHASE SERVICE

S. No	Particulars	Postpaid Respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid Respondent	Prepaid %
1	Highly dissatisfied	12	6	24	12
2	Un satisfied	10	5	20	10
3	Neutral	30	15	60	30
4	Satisfied	42	21	80	40
5	Highly Satisfied	106	53	26	13
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 4 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 53 percent of the respondents feel highly satisfied about the level after purchase experience, 21 percent of the respondents are satisfied of the component after purchase experience, 15 percent of the respondents felt neutral with after purchase experience, 6 percent of the respondents are very highly dissatisfied for after purchase experience and only 5 percent of the respondents are unsatisfied for after purchase experience. From table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid), 40 percent of the respondents are satisfied with after purchase experience, 30 percent of the respondents are neutral about after purchase experience, only 13 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied towards after purchase experience, 12 percent of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with after purchase experience and 10 percent of the respondents are unsatisfied with after purchase experience.

TABLE NO: 05: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS VALUE

S. No	Particulars	Postpaid respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid respondent	Prepaid %
1	Highly Unsatisfied	36	18	40	20
2	Unsatisfied	44	22	48	24
3	Neutral	48	24	52	26
4	Satisfied	40	20	40	20
5	Highly Satisfied	32	16	20	10
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 5 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 24 percent of the respondents feel neutral for value, 22 percent of the respondents are unsatisfied for value, 20 percent of the respondents are satisfied for value, 18 percent of the respondents are highly unsatisfied for value and 16 percent of the respondents are very highly satisfied for value. From table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid), 26 percent of the respondents feel neutrally for value, 24 percent of the respondents are unsatisfied for value, 20 percent of the respondents are highly unsatisfied for value, 20 percent of the respondents are satisfied for value and only 10 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied for value.

TABLE NO: 06: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR CUSTOMER LOYALTY

S. No	Particulars	Postpaid Respondent	Postpaid %	Prepaid Respondent	Prepaid %
1	Emotional attachment	52	26	60	30
2	Service quality	56	28	52	26
3	Brand identity	48	24	56	28
4	Customer relations	44	22	32	16
Total		200	100	200	100

From table 6 it is inferred that the respondents (postpaid), 28% of the respondents loyalty are based on Service quality, 26% of the respondents loyalty are based on Emotional attachment, 24% of the respondents loyalty are based on Brand identity and 22% of the respondents loyalty are based on Customer relations. From table it is also inferred that the respondents (prepaid), 30% of the respondent loyalty are based on Emotional attachment, 28% of the respondents loyalty are based on Brand identity, 26% of the respondents loyalty are based on Service quality and 16% of the respondents loyalty are based on Customer relations.

TABLE NO: 07: WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD OF CUSTOMERS RATING ON THE BASIS OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS POSTPAID CONNECTION

S. No	Particulars	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Highly un satisfied	Total Weighted	Weighted Average	Rank
1	Customer Satisfaction	28	40	52	44	36	580	2.9	3
2	Customer Service	28	60	48	44	20	632	3.16	2
3	After Purchase Service	106	42	50	10	12	880	4.4	1
4	Towards Value	32	40	48	44	36	588	2.9	3

The result revealed from the table 7 states that after purchase service is ranked first, it is also found that customers have ranked customer service at two and customer satisfaction and towards value for connection is ranked third opinion towards post paid connection.

TABLE NO: 08: WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD OF CUSTOMERS RATING ON THE BASIS OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS PREPAID CONNECTION

S. No	Particulars	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Highly un satisfied	Total Weighted	Weighted Average	Rank
1	Customer Satisfaction	40	56	48	32	24	656	3.28	3
2	Customer Service	32	84	60	63	24	826	4.13	1
3	After Purchase Service	26	80	60	20	24	694	3.47	2
4	Towards Value	20	40	52	48	40	552	2.76	4

The result revealed from the table 08 are found that customer service is ranked first among the other particulars, whereas after purchase service is ranked second, Customer satisfaction is ranked third and towards value for the connection is ranked fourth according to the opinion of the customer towards prepaid connection.

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