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SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN DTH SERVICES IN KANGRA, HIMACHAL PRADESH**LEKH RAJ****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES & LIBERAL ARTS****SHOOLINI UNIVERSITY OF BIOTECHNOLOGY & MANAGEMENT SCIENCES****SOLAN****ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in DTH (Direct To Home) service. Better service quality and customer satisfaction both are the indicators of corporate competitiveness. For investigating the relation between service quality and customer satisfaction, convenient random sampling was used to collect data from 180 customers of six paid DTH service providers in District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. The results of the research indicate that there exist significant relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience & Tangibles were found as the predictors of DTH service quality while Price, Other Factor & Assurance were found as the significant predictors of customer satisfaction in DTH services.

KEYWORDS

Customer satisfaction, DTH services, DTH service quality and service quality.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, service quality and customer satisfaction have become major areas of concern for research scholars, managers and practitioners. Both of these aspects have not yet been thought off considerably by DTH service providers. Besides this, DTH sector has shown a remarkable growth in last decade. It is because of the technological innovations and financial revolutions that have lead to the high pace in this sector. In order to retain this growth, DTH sector really has to put its efforts to define service quality, forms and the impact of quality deficiencies.

DTH SERVICE PROVIDERS IN INDIA

At present, there are total seven players providing DTH services to the Indian customers, i.e., DD Direct Plus, Airtel Digital TV, Dish TV, Reliance Digital TV, Sun Direct, Tata Sky and Videocon d2h. Out of these, six are paid DTH service providers while one government owned DTH service provider (DD Direct Plus) provides free services across the nation. The sector has shown significant growth in last five years and DTH subscriber base has reached to 54.52 million in the year 2012 in comparison to 11.10 million in 2008 (TRAI, Letter No. 1(516)/2013-RTI). Within a short span of five years, the DTH users have increased approximately five times (Table no.1).

TABLE NO. 1: GROWTH OF PAY DTH SERVICE SECTOR IN INDIA

Sr. No.	Year	Subscriber Base (in Millions)
1.	2008	11.10
2.	2009	19.10
3.	2010	32.05
4.	2011	44.21
5.	2012	54.52

Source: - TRAI, Letter No. 1(516)/2013-RTI

So it can be said that Indian market is attractive both in terms of volume as well as growth rate and create great opportunities for DTH service providers to expand their wings. But still both service quality and customer satisfaction need high attention and concern to retain this growth in near future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gronroos (1984) stated that perceived quality is the outcome of an evaluation process, where customer puts the perceived service against the expected service. Parasuraman et al., (1985, 1988) proposed that service quality can be measure through functional quality dimension having five components (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy). Gronroos (1993) defined three dimension service quality as functional quality, technical quality and image of the service provider. Smith et al., (1999) stated network quality, performance of technical team, customer care department, billing system, and perceived corporate image of the service provider as components of service quality. Woo and Fock (1999) founded that transmission quality and network coverage are the important factors of customer satisfaction. Menezes and Carvalho (2009) examined the impact of new technology on free to air TV industry and found that the amount of benefits gained from digitalization is conditioned by how the service was regulated and by socio-economic factors of the country. Hanif et al., (2010) found that price fairness and customer services play an important role in customer satisfaction. Siew-Phaik Loke et al., (2011) found a significant and positive relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction excluding in the area of tangibility. Rahman et al., (2012) proposed a model that focused on the relationship between technical quality, functional quality, corporate image of service provider and service quality towards customer's satisfaction. Gulati et al., (2011) picture and sound quality played an important role in customer satisfaction. Dhinakaran (2012) recommended that better network coverage and high picture clarity have significant role in DTH services. Madan et al., (2012) found that DTH customer gives the maximum weightage to tangibles dimension of service quality. Shakira Khan and Raj (2013) reported nine dimensions of DTH service quality namely assurance, reliability, tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, network quality, convenience, price and other factors. In case of customer satisfaction, Sutha and Jayanthi (2013) found non-significant difference between various attributes, while significant difference was found as far as customer preference is concerned. Jothswari et al., (2014) stated that DTH service providers are doing well in the field of customer awareness, customer perception, but choice of channels and charges, packages, to provide prompt information, signal quality, and signal breakage in rainy season etc. are the areas that needs more concern.

SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS FOR DTH SERVICES

For the present study nine determinants (Assurance, Reliability, Tangibles, Empathy, Responsiveness, Network Quality, Convenience, Price and Other Factors) were taken as the dimensions of DTH service quality. Khan and Raj (2013) explained all these nine with 29 statements as determinants of DTH service quality. Customer satisfaction was operationalised by four statements which are related to service quality and product quality provided by Direct-To-Home (DTH) service provider.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Service quality is the key for success in the future; however it will not be limited only to products. Therefore, successful DTH operators need to consider service quality in every aspects of their functioning. Hence it can be said that quality is a critical issue for the DTH services. Further the study acquires importance because of the high growth rate of DTH services in India and very few detailed studies have been carried out in the field.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Following main objectives are framed for the present research work.

1. To explore the key dimensions of service quality for Direct-To-Home (DTH) services.
2. To ascertain which aspects of service quality has significant impact on customer satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: Dimensions associated with service quality are significant drivers of overall customer perceived service quality in the Direct-To-Home (DTH) sector.

H₀₂: DTH service quality dimensions have significant positive influence on customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical in nature and is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The relevant secondary data has been collected from existing literature on service quality, various journal and websites of different national and international institutions. The Primary data was collected from the respondents by using questionnaire to know their perception about dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction. Price was taken as important determinants of DTH service quality so the customer of only paid DTH service providers (Airtel digital TV, Dish TV, Reliance Digital TV, Sun Direct, Tata Sky, and Videocon d2h) were selected.

STUDY AREA

The present research work was carried out in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. Kangra is most populated district of the Himachal Pradesh having the total population of 1,510,075, with literacy rate of 85.67 percent.

DATA COLLECTION

For the present study purpose a total of 200 customers from six DTH operators in district Kangra were approached by using convenient random sampling. Statistical calculations have been made, with the help of Microsoft excel and SPSS software. Appropriate tools for data analysis have been used as per the requirement of the study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Total 184 questionnaires received but only 180 were found suitable for the study and remaining were rejected due to incomplete information.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

In the following table no. 2 demographic characteristics of the respondents is presented.

TABLE NO. 2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Parameter	Airtel Digital TV	Dish TV	Reliance Digital TV	Sun Direct	Tata Sky	Videocon d2h	Total	%age
Age								
Less than 25 years	9	11	5	4	10	6	45	25
25-34 years	13	22	12	8	8	10	73	41
35-44 years	8	7	7	2	7	2	33	18
45-54 years	3	2	5	4	4	5	23	13
55 years and above	3	0	1	0	2	0	6	3
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Gender								
Male	21	25	22	12	20	17	117	65
Female	15	17	8	6	11	6	63	35
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Qualification								
Below secondary level	3	2	1	1	1	3	11	6
Secondary level	7	8	7	4	3	4	33	18
University bachelor degree	12	21	12	6	21	9	81	45
Masters/PG	13	9	9	7	3	6	47	26
others, specify	1	2	1	0	3	1	8	4
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Income								
Upto 10,000	3	7	2	4	4	5	25	14
10,001 to 20,000	11	18	6	3	11	6	55	31
20,001 to 30,000	8	10	14	8	8	4	52	29
30,001 to 40,000	6	1	3	0	3	3	16	9
40,001 to 50,000	5	4	1	2	1	3	16	9
50,001 and above	3	2	4	1	4	2	16	9
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Marital Status								
Married	26	31	20	12	23	19	131	73
Unmarried	10	11	10	6	8	4	49	27
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Profession								
Service	16	19	13	10	12	7	77	43
Own business	14	9	8	6	6	12	55	31
Student	3	6	4	2	6	2	23	13
Others, (Specify)	3	8	5	0	7	2	25	14
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Duration of Dealing								
Less than 1 year	0	6	7	0	7	6	26	14
1-2 years	10	7	7	1	9	7	41	23
2-3 years	14	12	8	7	3	6	50	28
3-4 years	5	11	3	5	4	4	32	18
4-5 years	1	3	3	2	4	0	13	7
5 years and above	6	3	2	3	4	0	18	10
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100
Monthly Expenditure								
Less than 250	24	33	21	12	21	17	128	71
251 to 350	7	6	4	5	6	4	32	18
351 to 450	4	3	4	1	3	2	17	9
451 and above	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	2
Total	36	42	30	18	31	23	180	100

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

Table 2 represents the demographic characteristics of the respondents used for the study. The results shows that about 41 percent of the respondents belong to the age group 25-34 years followed by the age group less than 25 years about 25 percent. The results indicate that about 65 percent of the respondents are male and 35 percent are female respondents. This section describes the education level of the respondents and states that 45 percent of the respondents have university bachelor degree and about 26 percent having Master/PG qualification. Talking about the income of the respondents, the results enumerate that 31 percent of the respondents lies in the income group 10,001 to 20,000 per month followed by income group 20,001 to 30,000 per month accounts for about 29 percent. It was found that about 73 percent of the respondents were married and about 27 percent were unmarried. Present section also define the profession of the respondents and states that about 43 percent of the respondents are in services and about 31 percent of the respondents have their own business. It was found that about 28 percent of the subscribers using DTH services from 2-3 years and 23 percent from last 1-2 years. The results informed that most of the subscribers about 71 percent spent less than 250 rupees on DTH services and about 18 percent spent rupees 251 to 350 on DTH services.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS DIMENSIONS

The correlation analysis was used to find the strength of the relationship between service quality and its dimensions. The result of Pearson correlation (table no.3) shows that all the dimensions of service quality are positively associated with it and strongest association was found between Service Quality and Assurance.

TABLE NO. 3: CORRELATION: SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS DIMENSIONS

	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Empathy	Responsiveness	Network Quality	Convenience	Price	OtherFactor
Service Quality	0.635	0.328	0.463	0.535	0.548	0.471	0.399	0.193	.343

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

To find out the best predictors of service quality and to identify which aspects of the service quality has significant influence on service quality; stepwise regression was used with the dimensions of service quality as the predictors. In the model nine dimensions of service quality dimensions were taken as independent variables and service quality as the dependent variable. The model summary Table 4 reports the strength of the relationship between the model

and the dependent variable. The value of R^2 indicates the variance of the model in the service quality construct in DTH sector. It can be seen that regression model explained 88.1 percent of the variance in the DTH service quality construct. As shown in table 5 there are only five variables (Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience and Tangibles) added from the original nine and are significant predictors of service quality in DTH sector.

TABLE NO. 4: REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY: SERVICE QUALITY AND DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std Error of Estimate
5	0.939	0.881	0.878	2.915

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

1. Independent Variable:- Dimensions of Service quality
2. Dependent Variable:- Service Quality

TABLE NO.5: STEPWISE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: SERVICE QUALITY

Variable	Beta	t- Value	Significance level	Collinearity Statistics	
(Constant)	16.906	6.770	0.000	Tolerance	VIF
Assurance	1.215	13.862	0.000	0.877	1.140
Empathy	1.646	12.561	0.000	0.893	1.120
Network Quality	0.999	15.078	0.000	0.945	1.058
Convenience	1.291	11.270	0.000	0.975	1.025
Tangibles	1.021	10.662	0.000	0.848	1.179

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The correlation analysis was used to find out the strength of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The result of Pearson correlation (table no.6) presents that dimensions of service quality are positively associated with customer satisfaction and strongest association was found between Customer Satisfaction and Price.

TABLE NO. 6: CORRELATION: SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Empathy	Responsiveness	Network Quality	Convenience	Price	Other Factor
Customer Satisfaction	0.470	0.380	0.388	0.436	0.406	0.396	0.378	0.529	0.419

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

To find out the best predictors of customer satisfaction and to identify which aspects of the service quality has significant influence on customer satisfaction; stepwise regression was used with the dimensions of service quality as the predictors. In the model nine dimensions of service quality dimensions were taken as independent variables and customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. As shown in table 8 there are only three variables (Price, Other Factor and Assurance) added from the original nine and are significant predictors of customer satisfaction in DTH sector.

TABLE NO. 7: REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY: SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std Error of Estimate
3	0.585	0.448	0.434	2.387

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

1. Independent Variable:- Dimensions of Service quality
2. Dependent Variable:- Customer satisfaction

TABLE NO. 8: STEPWISE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Variable	Beta	t- Value	Significance level	Collinearity Statistics	
(Constant)	4.965	3.202	0.002	Tolerance	Tolerance
Price	0.448	4.137	0.000	1.000	1.000
Other Factor	0.273	2.713	0.007	0.998	1.002
Assurance	0.154	2.297	0.023	0.998	1.002

Source: - Data Collected through Questionnaire Method

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience and Tangibles were found as the dimensions of DTH service quality. Thus the hypothesis H_01 : Dimensions associated with service quality are significant drivers of overall customer perceived service quality in the Direct-To-Home (DTH) sector is partially accepted.

Price, Other Factor and Assurance were found as the significant predictors of customer satisfaction in DTH services. Same here the hypothesis H_02 : DTH service quality dimensions have significant positive influence on customer satisfaction is partially accepted.

FINDINGS

From the present study, major findings drawn are as under:

1. Most of the respondents were from the age group 25-34 years and male respondents in the present study were about 65 percent. It was found that majority of the respondents were well qualified and total married respondents were 73 percent. About 31 percent were in the income group 10,001 to 20,000 rupees per month followed by income group 20,001 to 30,000.
2. Results indicated that about 28 percent of respondents are using DTH services from last 2-3 years. Most of the respondents were paying less than 250 rupees per month on DTH services.
3. It was found that nine dimensions are positively associated with DTH service quality and the main predictors of the DTH service quality are Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience and Tangibles. Empathy was found as the best predictor of service quality in DTH services.
4. A positive association was found between the dimensions of DTH service quality and customer satisfaction. Price, Other factor and Assurance, were found as the three predictors of customer satisfaction in DTH sector. Price appeared as best predictor of customer satisfaction in DTH services.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to improve the DTH service quality, DTH operators should have to focus on the dimensions of Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience and Tangibles. It is very important to give individual attention to the subscribers and to know about their specific needs. Customer satisfaction can be enhanced by paying proper attention towards Price, Other factors and Assurance. In order to satisfy the customers, service providers should provide the services at reasonable price and consider the budget objectives of the DTH users while framing price policy for the services.

CONCLUSIONS

This research paper has outlined the dimensions of DTH service quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction. A significant positive relationship was found between DTH service quality and its dimensions. Out of all the nine dimensions of service quality, Assurance, Empathy, Network Quality, Convenience & Tangibles were found as the main governing dimensions of DTH service quality. Adding more to the significant relationship which exists between the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction, Price, Other Factor and Assurance were found as the significant predictors of customer satisfaction in DTH services. Therefore, in the light of above stated facts, it can be said that DTH service providers have to focus on Empathy, Convenience and Assurance to deliver high quality services. In order to ensure high customer satisfaction level, DTH service providers have to put efforts to provide services at reasonable price and to meet budget objectives of the subscribers.

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