

Perception of International Mobile Communication Service: A Study of Kolkata

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Key Words:

1. Perception,
2. Mobile Telecommunication service,
3. Indian International Travellers,
4. International SIM cards.

Abstract

- Growing customer's need for cheap, accessible and efficient communication modes has resulted in the phenomenal growth of cellular phone industry around the world in general. Many people who are travelling abroad these days either for vacation or work related matters are using international SIM cards. Network connectivity of a telecommunication service, after reaching the international location, is an important criterion for a prospective Indian customer. Moreover, international telecommunication service is itself a costly affair. But at the same time the customers need to interact with other persons, specially the corporate people or, the people who go out for pleasure trips. This study tries to identify the factors which motivate the customers in buying such services. There are number of factors that can influence the decision of whether to go for international telecom service or a local one depending on versatile issues. The study indicates some compelling factors such as network connectivity rather than cost.

INTRODUCTION

'If you don't care and serve your customers well, somebody else will do'. Competitors are always trying to divert your customer loyalty towards their own product. In service sector customer satisfaction directly depends on empathetic employees, helpful employees, knowledgeable employees, courteous employees, quick service, service quality, good value, timeliness, clarity & accuracy of billing, competitive pricing. Customer collects information from personal sources, market controlled sources, public sources, personal experiences. The perceptual risks of choice of a new service include functional risk of non-performance, financial risk, time or temporal loss, physical risk, psychological risk of anxiety.

In the last two decades, the Indian Telecom Sector has seen a vast change due to revolution brought by the way we communicate, share information and stay connected. The mobile telecom industry has witnessed significant growth in subscriber base with increasing network coverage. The growth rate and the potentials of this sector

promises have helped in attracting newer players in the industry. Indian telecommunications is one of the competitive markets witnessing rapid growth. In 1994, the government released its National Telecommunications Policy (NTP-94), which allowed entry of private players in the Indian market for the first time. According to, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, India is currently the second-largest telecommunication market and has the third highest number of internet users in the world.

Many people who are travelling abroad these days and are using international mobile telecommunication service. International travelling is itself a costly affair. But at the same time the customers need to interact with other persons, specially the corporate people or, the people who go out for pleasure trips.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Telecommunication technology contributes to the economic development. Growing customer's need for cheap, accessible and efficient communication modes has resulted in the phenomenal growth of cellular phone industry around the world in general. This study tries to identify the factors which motivate the customers in buying such SIM cards. So the broader objective of the study was

- To find out the factors which make the Indian customers to buy international mobile telecommunication service while travelling in other countries.

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- To retrieve the perception of Indian international travelers regarding the preference of SIM while travelling.
- To design the marketing strategy of mobile phone service for Indian international travelers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

All service organizations are quality driven (Bitner, Mary Jo., Booms, Bernard H., Tetreault, Mary S., 1990). Customer satisfaction serves as an exit barrier, helping a firm to retain its customers, directly depends on friendly / helpful / knowledgeable/ courteous employees, quick service, service quality, good value, timeliness, clarity, accuracy of billing and competitive pricing (Fornell, 1992). Customer switching is industry specific, limits the generalization and need to adopt broader perspective (Berry and Parasuraman 1993). Customer switches brands due to pricing, inconvenience, core service failure, service encounter failure, and response to service failure, competition, ethical problems, and involuntary switching (Susan M. Keaveney, 1995). It costs more to gain a new customer than to retain an existing one (Woodruff, 1997). Low morale, uncommitted staff, poor quality, over charges, unethical behavior, blind cooperation results into negative perception among customers. Hence, a guideline is required for developing service recovery procedures to improve customer service and enhance customer relationships (Smith K. Amy, Bolton N Ruth, Wagner Janet, 1999). At the same time expectations also serve as a major determinant of a customer's service quality evaluations and satisfaction (O'Connor et al, 2000). Absences of standards for provision of care and agreement on predetermined rates for reimbursement are two critical factors in developing an insurance based system of financing (Bhatt Ramesh., Jain Nishant, 2006). Further, "Voice of the customer" should be considered during design process using advanced techniques (Pakdil, Ayden, 2007). Even, technological orientation and relationship; integrated health care (efficiency, openness, quality); sensitivity to response (elements of development; competence); Vision and work culture (spirituality, effectiveness and ethics); Concern, commitment and consideration; compatible and reciprocative relationships (appraisal, responsiveness, welfare); promotion of self-discipline (transparency, recognition, empathy, housekeeping) are the effective dimensions of success of service marketing (Shah. Nidhi, Dhar Upinder, 2007). Even brand name (Aaker, 1996), price (cadogan & Foster, 2000), promotion (Czerniawski & Maloney, 1999), and service quality stimulates brand loyalty

in case of mobile service (Almossawi, 2012). Price escalation, changing needs of customers, core service failure, inconvenience and voluntary reasons are the factors influencing the mobile customers to switch brands (Mallikarjuna, Krishna Mohan, 2010).

According to Rajpurohit & Vasita, (2011) consumers prefer a particular mobile phone service provider based on call tariffs, network coverage and value added services. The study organized in Assam, India indicates that the customers have shown their inclination towards festival offer service, free roaming service, validity service, bonus service and online recharge service and extreme dissatisfaction on service quality of network, customer care, SMS packs, free talk time, connection charges, ease of availability of the retailer selling recharge coupon & retailers transferring recharge voucher (Pandiya, Kumar, Chaudhury, 2014).

Hence the hypothesis can be designed as

H1 : Customers availing international mobile services are influenced by advertisements

H2 : Customers are scared of mobile service roaming charges that indirectly influence their purchase.

H3 : During foreign travel, customers are interested about the value added service offered by a mobile service provider.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is based on a field survey. An organized structured questionnaire has been prepared to get the first hand opinion of the customers to understand the buying motive of international mobile telecommunication service or international SIM cards during their foreign trip. With the help of a purposive sampling, the visitors of a foreign location are being identified as our primary data source. The respondents (travelers leaving Kolkata Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose international airport) were approached with a set of questionnaire with a multiple choice answer set ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a ascending scale of 1-5. Sample size was 100. The studied factors are Security of the connection(scrt), Post sales service(psls), Validity of plans(vldty), Network strength(ncnc), Advertisement(adv), Brand image(bimg), Call Tariffs(trf), Sales promotion(sprmo), Value Added Service -SMS, MMS, CLIPS(vas), Ease of availability and recharge facility(avlt), Customer Care Service(ccre), Roaming facility(rmng), Rebate and Discount on calls(dscnt), Voice Clarity(vclrty), Transparency in Billing(srvq), Word of mouth(wom), Peer



Recommendation(peer), Mobile Handsets -GSM, CDMA(hndset), Top up via Online, Talk time/Talk value (etc), Network variability(ncvr).

The data so collected is being coded, interpreted and analyzed with the help of excel and software (STATA12). Secondary data used in this project were collected from versatile journal, magazines, websites etc. The versatile variables that affect the choice of purchase an international mobile service provider are identified and the effective components are being extracted by using Principle Component Analysis (PCA).

DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

The Opinion of the respondents are as follows

Among the respondents 22% were female. Even, a dominating percentage was belonging to urban only. 17%,

28%, 37%, 17% and 3.2% respondents were respectively belonged to 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and >60 years of age. Further 50% of the respondents had bachelor degree. 49% were belonged to business group whereas 50% were service holders and the rest were dependent. Also, 50% of the respondents were found to have more than Rs.50000/- monthly income whereas 37% were belonged to 41-50000/- monthly income. Moreover, 60% had postpaid connection and interestingly they belonged to only business class and 17% were identified as both once or yearly international visitors. The source of knowledge regarding international SIM cards was found mostly from friends.

Table 1: Perception of respondents on several aspect of choice of mobile phone service.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Network Connectivity Plays An Important Factor On The Use Of Matrix Sim Card	14.28	85.71	0	0	0
Special Attention Would Be Given To Network Coverage	97.14	2.87	0	0	0
Consideration Would Be Given To Call Tariff	97.14	2.87	0	0	0
Service Quality Would Be An Important Factor	91.42	8.57	0	0	0
Security Of A Sim Connection Would Be An Important Factor	97.14	2.87	0	0	0
Special Consideration Would Be Given To Advertisement	91.42	5.71	0	0	0
Sales Promotion Would Be An Important Factor	5.71	82.85	5.71	0	0
Special Consideration Would Be Given To Value Added Service(Vas) [i.e., Sms, Mms and Clips	5.71	82.85	11.42	0	0
Ease Of Availability And Recharge Facility Would Be An Important Factor	8.57	85.71	5.71	0	0
Special Consideration Would Be Given To Customer Care Services	94.28	5.71	0	0	0
Roaming Facility Would Be An Important Factor	94.28	5.71	0	0	0
Special Consideration Would Be Given To Rebate And Discount On Calls	17.14	82.85	0	0	0
Special Consideration Would Be Given To Voice Clarity	54.28	45.71	0	0	0
Special Consideration Should Be Given To Transparency In Billing	40	60	0	0	0
Word Service Would Be An Important Consideration	100	0	0	0	0
Advice Of Friends And Relatives Influences Purchase Decision	0	14.28	80	5.71	0
Price (Return On Investment) Is An Essential Criterion Of Choosing An International Sim Card	0	77.14	2.85	20	0
Post Sales Service Is Necessary For Choosing An International Sim Card	100	0	0	0	0
Validity Of Plans Plays An Important Role In Choosing An International Sim Card	88.57	11.42	0	0	0
Mobile Handsets (Gsm & Cdma) Plays An Important Role In Using An International Sim Card	60	40	0	0	0
Top-Up Via Online Is An Important Factor In Using An International Sim Card	0	97.14	0	0	0

Source: Primary Data Analysis.



To explore the answer of the factors influencing the drive level of the prospective visitors of international location extensive analysis was conducted. The questionnaire scale reliability was 0.76 and KMO test value was 0.51. Hence, the data set is valid for Principle Component Analysis. The components with Eigen value more than 1 are Comp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The variables that have a value equal to or more than 0.40 have been considered for precision of result. Components with Eigen value more than 1 and the variables with more than the value 0.40 has been represented as follows,

- Component I = No Variable
- Component II = (- Network variability), Advertisement
- Component III = Ease of availability and recharge facility.
- Component IV = Rebate and Discount on calls.
- Component V = (-Customer Care Service), Roaming facility.
- Component VI = Value added service
- Component VII = Voice clarity, Peer Recommendation.
- Component VIII = Network strength, Customer Care Service.

Table 3:- Relationship Between Factor And Variable.

Variable	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	Comp 5	Comp 6	Comp 7	Comp 8	Comp 9	Comp 10
bimg	-0.2418	-0.0004	0.3393	0.3534	-0.0694	0.0111	0.1757	0.1053	-0.0149	0.1716
ncnc	-0.0346	0.0168	-0.0790	0.2967	0.1390	0.2433	-0.2571	0.4979	-0.3007	0.2942
ncvr	0.0725	-0.4236	0.3206	-0.0853	0.1080	-0.1166	-0.3090	0.0158	0.1788	0.2473
trf	0.3176	0.2855	0.0697	0.1117	-0.2082	0.0622	-0.2420	-0.3557	0.2276	0.0768
srvq	0.3615	0.3186	0.1947	0.0834	-0.1087	-0.3033	0.0565	0.1322	0.0252	0.1902
scrty	0.3414	0.2549	0.0238	0.0016	0.0746	-0.2114	0.0166	0.2734	0.3443	0.1819
adv	-0.1991	0.4554	0.0082	-0.1125	0.3333	0.0839	0.0341	-0.0494	-0.0488	-0.2536
sprmo	-0.2413	0.2450	0.3017	-0.2561	-0.0470	0.1871	-0.0920	0.0302	-0.0572	0.2362
vas	0.1505	-0.0068	0.2491	0.2768	0.1142	0.4769	0.1058	-0.3668	0.1159	-0.1150
avlt	0.1741	-0.3948	0.4011	-0.0380	0.2393	0.0399	-0.1337	-0.0391	-0.0878	-0.1708
ccre	-0.0013	-0.1463	0.0091	-0.0246	-0.4632	0.2498	0.3100	0.4219	0.2025	-0.1546
rmng	-0.0558	0.0368	0.1550	0.3281	0.4657	-0.1846	0.1959	0.0921	0.2499	-0.0013
dscnt	-0.1426	0.0559	-0.1299	0.4479	-0.1047	0.0700	-0.1835	0.0164	0.3268	-0.3288
vclrty	0.1056	-0.0709	0.2927	-0.2070	-0.2077	0.0411	0.4204	-0.0106	0.1070	-0.0415
etc	-0.3128	0.0529	0.3309	0.2286	-0.1168	-0.3343	0.0898	0.0707	-0.0945	-0.2215
wom	-0.2341	0.1472	0.2158	0.1351	-0.3843	-0.0403	-0.1900	-0.2596	-0.2066	0.2583
peer	-0.0799	-0.1611	-0.2404	0.1281	0.0633	-0.3393	0.4244	-0.3345	-0.1477	0.2689
psls	0.3190	0.1401	0.2063	-0.0219	-0.0281	-0.1779	-0.0348	0.0963	-0.5147	-0.4502
vldty	0.3377	0.0130	-0.0589	0.2708	0.0537	0.3278	0.3036	-0.0209	-0.3334	0.2026
hndset	-0.1636	0.2187	0.1789	-0.3025	0.2557	0.2114	0.2104	0.0428	0.0920	0.1401

Source: Primary Data Analysis.



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Component VI = Value added service

Component VII = Voice clarity, Peer Recommendation.

Component VIII = Network strength, Customer Care Service.

Component II derived two variables contradicting each other identifies that either there is shortfall in information or mismatch between promise through advertisement and performance. Component V also signals the necessary revisal of roaming charges which in return will create better image of customer care service of the service providing organization.

Hence, it can be said that, H1, H2, H3 cannot be rejected.

CONCLUSION

It is identified that, a mobile service provider for international traveler must design their product advertisement highlighting the benefit of the connection to their prospective customer. Further, as network connectivity after reaching the international location is an important criterion for a prospective customer so, telecommunication service provider should concentrate on it. Rather, they must arrange a hassle free system of connection for their customer. Moreover, customers are sensitive about international roaming charges of mobile services and regulations of a foreign land. Mobile telecom service provider should even promote their brand through point of service for new connections at easy accessible point of purchase i.e. International airports of India and other foreign location for better access of their product. They must consider and analyze the customer's opinion about the value added services. So, they must provide a

new system like 'connection on the spot on arrival' for their customers which can act as game changing marketing technique. So, a new system of service can be offered for all the international customers like MMS, SMS, free calls, extended validity of a SIM, easy recharge facility, and free insurance as an additional advantage with their normal package. In short, a comprehensive package will be a game changing marketing strategy in a competitive market. Moreover, minimum roaming charges or roaming free mobile connection for an international mobile service will help to attract new customers. Keeping in view of new practicing trend of mobile internet a combination package that will club phone calls and internet facility can also be introduced. Time has arrived that mobile service provider must design strategy for the masses rather than classes to retain more customer and hence to sustain in a competitive environment.

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