CUSTOMERS’ PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION ON AIRTelia 3G DATA SERVICE

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ABSTRACT
Airtel is the largest mobile operator in South Asia and the fourth largest in the world by subscriber base. It operates in 20 countries across South Asia, Africa and the Channel Islands. Airtel provides GSM, 3G and 4G LTE mobile services, fixed line broadband and voice services depending upon the country of operation. 3G services are expected to drive the next phase of growth in the wireless segment with enhanced focus on providing data services and Internet. The quality of services provided is directly proportional to the customer satisfaction and word of mouth as each customer generally compares the tangible services with their own expectations and if the tangible one falls below their expectations, the customer generally is disappointed and that affects his loyalty towards the company. In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the customers’ preference and satisfaction towards Airtel 3G data service offered in Pollachi Taluk. The study mainly depends on primary data which is collected from 110 customers of Airtel 3G data service by adopting convenience sampling technique. Simple percentage is used to analyse the data. The study reveals that speed is the main reason for preferring Airtel 3G data service and most of the customers are using data service for business purpose. Also, the study discloses that customers are highly satisfied with speed of data and network followed by price charged for data service, offers, validity, customer care, and online recharge facility whereas the customers are dissatisfied with bonus offered by the provider.

Keywords: Airtel Network – 3G-Data Service - Customer Preference and Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION
Airtel is the largest mobile operator in South Asia and the fourth largest in the world by subscriber base. Bharti Airtel Limited is an Indian multinational telecommunications Services Company headquartered in New Delhi, India. It operates in 20 countries across South Asia, Africa, and the Channel Islands. Airtel provides GSM, 3G and 4G LTE mobile services, fixed line broadband and voice services depending upon the country of operation. It is the largest cellular service provider in India, with 192.22 million subscribers as of August 2013. Airtel is credited with pioneering the business strategy of outsourcing all of its business operations except marketing, sales and finance and building the ‘minutes factory’ model of low cost and high volumes. The transmission towers are maintained by subsidiaries and joint venture companies of Bharti including Bharti Infratel and Indus Towers in India.

3G services are expected to drive the next phase of growth in the wireless segment with enhanced focus on providing data services and Internet. Development of applications useful to people will be the key to success. The Indian market is highly price sensitive; therefore, it is imperative that relevant applications be made available to consumers at affordable cost. It is hoped that availability of cheaper handsets together with useful content will drive the next phase of growth. The quality of services provided is directly proportional to the customer satisfaction and word of mouth as each customer generally compares the tangible services with their own expectations and if the tangible one falls below their expectations, the customer generally is disappointed and that affects his loyalty towards the company.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Essentially, good quality at a cheaper cost and few value added service and sincere service with smile when you are in trouble; these are what excellent data service is all about. There are various data service provider in our country and they are playing an essential role fulfilling the needs of the customers. Just like any other service industry in India, it is very difficult to refer any 3G data service provider as “The Best”. But we can find a best one after conducting a brief study. The success of the service providers depends upon the customer’s satisfaction. In this backdrop, an attempt has been made to study the customers’ level of awareness and satisfaction towards Airtel 3G data service offered in Pollachi Taluk.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study.

- To ascertain the customers’ preference on Airtel 3G data service and
- To identify customers’ level of satisfaction on Airtel 3G data service

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is mainly based on primary data which is collected through issue of questionnaire. The Questionnaire contains questions relating to socio-economic profile, preference and satisfaction of customers towards Airtel 3G data service. The data required for the study have been collected by issuing questionnaire to 120 customers in Pollachi taluk. Of the total 120 questionnaires issued, 115 questionnaires are collected and out of the 115 questionnaires collected, 110 questionnaires are taken for analysis because of incomplete information found in the five questionnaires. Convenience sampling method is adopted to select the sample users. The data collected are analyzed using simple percentage.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are divided into four sections namely, socio-economic profile of customers, source of awareness, purpose and details of using Airtel 3G data service, preference on Airtel 3G data service and satisfaction on Airtel 3G data service and the results are depicted in the following paragraphs.

(i) Socio-Economic Profile of Sample Respondents

The findings relating to socio-economic profile of sample customers like area of residence, age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and monthly income are disclosed below.

- Most of 49 (44.54%) customers belong to urban area
- Majority of the customers, 60 (54.54%) belong to up to 25 years age group
- Majority of the Airtel 3G users, 65(59.09%) are male
- Majority of the Airtel 3G users, 56 (50.91%) are single
- Majority of the customers, 62(64.81%) are post-graduates
- Most of 47 (40.85%) customers are students
- Most of 43(39.09%) customers’ monthly income is between Rs.10,001 and Rs.30,000

(ii) Source of Awareness, Purpose and Details of using Airtel 3G Data Service

The findings with regard to source of awareness on Airtel 3G data service, purpose of using and period of using Airtel 3G data service are given below.

- Majority of the customers, 63 (57.27%) came to know about Airtel 3G data service through their friends followed by family members and advertisements
Most of the respondents, 52 (47.27%) are using the data service for business purpose followed by social media, education and playing games

Most of the customers, 40 (36.36%) are using the data service for application downloading followed by movies and music and video downloading

Most of 46 (41.81%) customers are using the data service for a period between three and five years followed by one to three years and up to one year

Majority of the customers, 85 (77.27%) prefer mobile as the means to operate data service followed by laptop and personal computer

(iii) Preference on Airtel 3G Data Service

Reason for choosing airtel 3G data service, type of scheme and plan preferred are described in the table given below.

Table-2: Preference on Airtel 3G Data Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Number of Respondents (N=110)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Choosing Airtel 3G Data Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide coverage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient Mode of Recharge</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Scheme Preferred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpaid</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Preferred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited Plan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Best Plan</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Based Plan</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Rental Plan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Most of 46 (41.82%) customers prefer Airtel 3G data service because of its speed followed by brand name, wide coverage and convenient mode of recharge
- Majority of the customers, 84 (76.36%) are using prepaid scheme
- Majority of the customers, 49 (58.84%) prefer ‘My Best Plan’ followed by ‘Speed Based Plan’ and ‘Unlimited Plan’ and surprisingly found that none of the sample customers have preferred ‘Advanced Rental Plan’

(iv) Level of Satisfaction on Airtel 3G Data Service

The customers’ satisfaction on Airtel 3G data service is measured by considering the variables like price fixed, speed of data, network connection, offers, customer care, validity, bonus offered and online recharge facility and it is depicted in the table given below.
Table-3: Satisfaction Level of Airtel 3G Data Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Highly Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price Fixed for Data Service</td>
<td>52 (47.27%)</td>
<td>17 (15.45%)</td>
<td>16 (14.54%)</td>
<td>25 (22.72%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of Data</td>
<td>109 (91.82%)</td>
<td>9 (8.18%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Connection</td>
<td>16 (14.54%)</td>
<td>57 (51.81%)</td>
<td>1 (0.90%)</td>
<td>30 (27.27%)</td>
<td>6 (5.45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>31 (28.18%)</td>
<td>53 (48.18%)</td>
<td>20 (18.18%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>6 (5.46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Care</td>
<td>30 (27.27%)</td>
<td>32 (29.10%)</td>
<td>22 (20.00%)</td>
<td>26 (23.63%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>49 (44.54%)</td>
<td>31 (28.18%)</td>
<td>30 (27.27%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus offered</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>31 (28.18%)</td>
<td>34 (30.90%)</td>
<td>45 (40.92%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Recharge Facility</td>
<td>28 (25.45%)</td>
<td>48 (43.65%)</td>
<td>34 (30.90%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it is ascertained that majority of the customers are highly satisfied with the speed of 3G data service followed by network connection. Also, most of the customers are satisfied with price fixed for data service, offers, customer care, validity period and online recharge facility whereas most of the customers are dissatisfied with the bonus offered by the service provider.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the opinion given by Airtel 3G data service users at the time of data collection, the following suggestions are put forth.

- Awareness should be created among the users of Airtel 3G data service
- Processing speed may further be increased
- Airtel should offer long term loyalty benefits staggered over period of time
- Offering special discount or bonus or a value added pack could help to win back the subscriber

CONCLUSION

The analysis exposed that there is a considerable percentage of awareness prevailing among the customers about the service of Airtel 3G data service. There are some additional factors which affect quality of services. Customer awareness, launch of services by new operators, attractive/aggressive tariff plans, innovative services, vas offering, time to resolve disputes etc. In India, several new operators are entering the market and the market and monthly addition of new subscriber is still very high. Also customers play a very vital role in successful delivery of service as customers are often
present at the place where service is as per customer defined specifications. Other customers who are present at the time of service can also influence the service positively or negatively.

Consumer’s preference and satisfaction is the measuring scale of creditability of the service provided by any organization. Internet service providers are not exceptions to it. This research study gives an opportunity to get the feedback of the customers regarding their satisfaction levels about the service offered by the service providers.

REFERENCES