

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF FIXED-LINE TELECOM SERVICES IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract— With the progression of communication technologies, there has been a decline in people's utilization of fixed-line telephones. It is essential to ascertain the fundamental causes underlying this phenomenon. There are numerous assumptions that service providers tend to favor their interests. Gaining an understanding of the factors that contribute to client satisfaction may require a significant investment of effort. Consequently, this study aims to ascertain the determinants that impact consumers' happiness with their fixed-line telecommunications service. In order to achieve the objectives of the research, a theoretical framework is presented whereby consumer satisfaction is considered the dependent variable. At the same time, responsiveness, perceived value, perceived service quality, and staff attitude are regarded as independent variables. The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the key factors that significantly influence Customer Satisfaction with Fixed-Line Telecom Services in Pakistan.

Keywords— Fixed line telecom services; Customer Satisfaction Model; Pakistan.

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of traditional landlines for telephone and other communications is becoming less common as time goes on. [1] [2] State that dissatisfaction on the part of customers with the standard of the services that are offered should be a high degree is one of the primary reasons for this phenomenon. There are around 3 million subscribers of fixed-line telecom services at present, as reported by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) in the year 2022. Similarly, according to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority [3,] the percentage of people who use fixed-line telecommunications services is steadily falling compared to the number of people who use cellular services, putting the continued existence of fixed-line telecommunications providers in comparison to the number of people who use cellular services, putting the continued existence of fixed-line telecommunications providers in risk. The only way for telecom service providers to thrive in such an unstable environment is for them to accept reform in both their approach to providing services and the quality of those services. At the turn of the century, mobile internet services had become good enough that they could do the same things that wired networks had always done. Before, these services

could only be used on wired networks. One of the hardest things for fixed-line telecommunication service companies has always been keeping their current customers. [4] On the other hand, as competition among fixed-line telecom service providers grows, prices are also going down. Fixed-line telecommunication service providers in Pakistan face issues in both retaining their present client base and attracting new consumers to their services. Even though large-scale investments have been made to solve problems with the network and make consumers happy, the number of customers who use fixed-line telecom services continues to fall, which is depressing. As a result, it is essential to determine the primary customer satisfaction determinant to assist fixed-line telecom service providers in maintaining relationships with their present customers and drawing in new users. This study seeks to achieve the aims of the subject study.

- A. To obtain a research model for knowing what satisfies customers with fixed-line telecom services in Pakistan.

II. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION THEORIES AND MODELS

With respect to customer service, the concept of "customer satisfaction" relates to a customer's assessment of the quality and usefulness of a product or service, and it is regarded as a primary principle. It is essential to have a solid understanding of client satisfaction theories in order to ensure the continued existence of any company, regardless of whether it is now in the midst of a crisis or is suffering from a reduction in its customer base. Furthermore, according to [9], the information regarding customer satisfaction is extremely useful for businesses in evaluating their capability of effectively meeting the requirements and requirements of their customers. [10] made the case that to thrive in today's cutthroat business environment, it is essential to recognize the important variables that contribute to customer satisfaction. Spreng and Mackey [11], the researchers who evaluated the Performance Model, stated that the overall influence of the performance of any service or product has a positive impact on client satisfaction. This is true whether the service or product is being rated positively or negatively by the consumer. They also maintained that there is a deep

association in-between the quality of service provided and the amount that the consumer perceives to have been charged for a particular service or product.

Oliver [12] came to the conclusion, based on his customer satisfaction model, that the amount of satisfaction reached is influenced not just by quality dimensions but also by non-quality dimensions. Although one of the most significant elements that influence total customer satisfaction is the customer's opinion of the quality of the service given.

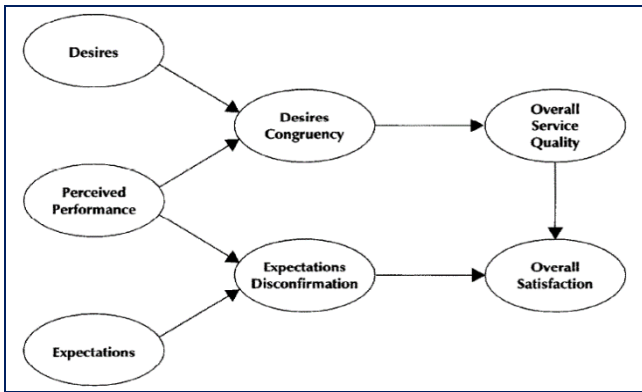


Figure 1. Customer Satisfaction Model source [12]

Hokanson [13] outlined his well-known technique for determining the level of client happiness. In his model, he discovered a number of different aspects that could have an independent impact on the total pleasure of the client. According to him, some of the primary elements that determine whether or not a consumer is satisfied with a business are the following: knowledgeable staff, helpful employees, nice employees, courteous employees, timely billing, good value, billing clarity, service quality, the accuracy of billing competitive price, and rapid service.

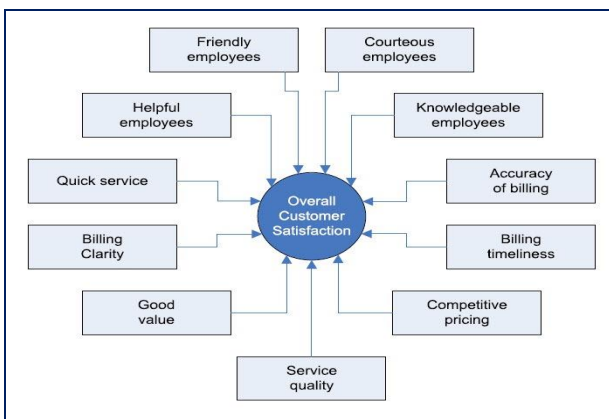


Figure 2. Hokanson's model of customer satisfaction (Source: [13])

Parasuraman [14] devised yet another model for evaluating service quality, generally referred to as SERVQUAL. According to the authors, this model evaluates and categorizes all five traits of service quality, including assurance, dependability, empathy tangibles, and responsiveness. Although the authors believe that each of these aspects of customer satisfaction significantly impacts overall customer satisfaction, they emphasized premium

service quality as the most important factor to consider when trying to gain a competitive advantage in the services sector. Additionally, customer satisfaction depends on the client's perception of the service's quality and their confidence level in the service provider.

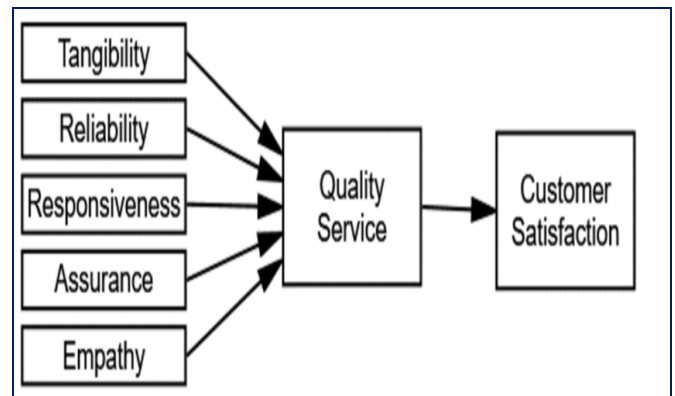


Figure 3. SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman Source: [14]

III. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to researchers Peng, Leong, and W. Y. [5] Customers are more inclined to allocate their financial resources towards expenditures on businesses that are willing to deliver high-quality products and services to their customers while staying within their given financial means. Many researchers have been done to comprehend this philosophy for example [6, 7, 8, 2] have made an effort to experimentally identify significant variables of customer satisfaction and the association between satisfaction and quality of service in a variety of contextual circumstances. Research studies of this kind have typically been carried out in established economies such as Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom. However, no such study has been undertaken in Pakistan. An exhaustive review of the relevant literature determined that no such exploratory study examines the factors influencing customer satisfaction with fixed-line telecom services.

This research aims to investigate the interrelationships between Responsiveness, Perceived Value, Perceived Service Quality, and Staff Attitude, as well as the impact these factors have on Customer Satisfaction in Pakistan's fixed-line telecom services. The research framework that has been developed can be seen in Figure 4, and it depicts hypothesized correlations between determinants of customer satisfaction in the context of fixed-line telecom services. The following hypotheses have been proposed:

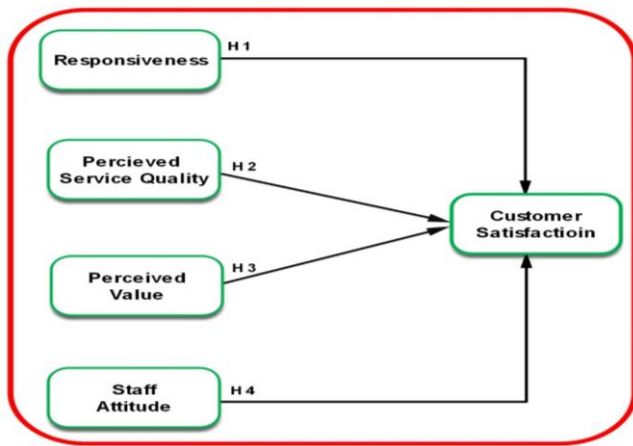


Figure 4 Proposed Research Model

A. Customer Satisfaction

Shava, H. [18] and Basheer [8] believed that customer satisfaction is one of the prominent factors for retaining the customer base for any service and product industry. Therefore, to compete and survive in a market space, special focus is needed to understand how and what is needed to satisfy customers.

B. Responsiveness

Consumers usually adhere to a service provider that capitalizes on its workforce and other resources to quickly respond to their customer grievances and fix their complaints in a prompt manner (Rahaman & Rahman, 2011). Customers' trust is also gained in responding to their issues as soon as possible. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that:

H1. *Responsiveness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.*

C. Perceived Service Quality

Many researchers [18,8,2] considered and evaluated perceived Service quality as widely recognized as a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction across many contextual circumstances. More specifically, as per Santos [19] Customer satisfaction refers to the evaluation made by customers regarding the quality-of-service provision. So, it can be hypothesized that:

H2. *Perceived service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

D. Perceived Value

M Salleh [20], found that firms who take care of their customers in terms of charges get a higher degree of consumer happiness, which subsequently results in customer commitment and loyalty. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H3. *Perceived Value has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

E. Staff Attitude

Staff attitude is a measure of how employees of service providers behave with their clients in any service outage issue. According to Lee [21] most service provider organizations need to train their employees to value their customers according to organizational policies. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H4. *Staff attitude has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction*

IV. CONCLUSION

The number of fixed-line consumers is declining daily as a result of the inadequate service rendered by the service provider. This study aims to identify the primary determinants contributing to the shift of customers from fixed lines to alternative technologies. This will be achieved by presenting a theoretical framework that elucidates the interconnections among various predictor variables associated with this phenomenon. Based on an extensive review of the existing scholarly literature about customer satisfaction models and theories, it is evident that the primary determinants of customer satisfaction are Responsiveness, Perceived Quality, Perceived Value, and Staff attitude. These elements exert a direct influence on the level of consumer satisfaction. This study's next direction involves empirically validating the positive relationships among these characteristics using a qualitative method. This will be achieved by data gathering from respondents.

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