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DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN PAKISTAN'S TELECOM SECTOR: AN EXMINATION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STAYERS AND SWITCHERS

By

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ABSTRACT

Customer loyalty has gained foremost attention among the practitioners and the academic researchers because of its proximity to organizational growth, profit and survival. Based on existing literature, this study has highlighted a few critical issues related to the telecommunication sector in Pakistan such as the decline in subscriber growth, decrease in average revenue, and the increasing trend of users switching among the telecom operators. The objective of the present study was to analyze the impact of perceived service quality, price fairness, justice to service and relational bonds on customer loyalty with the mediating role of customer satisfaction and the moderating role of corporate image. This study also investigated the perceptions of stayer- and switcher- users on the determinants of customer loyalty. The framework of the present study was based on the Oliver Four Stage Model, the Expectancy Confirmation Model and the Principles of Reciprocity. Data for the current study was collected from 539 prepaid subscribers based in four major capital cities of Pakistan through questionnaires by adopting the proportionate stratified random sampling. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS version 23 and the Smart PLS Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings of the study revealed that perceived service quality and customer satisfaction are the main driving forces to customer loyalty. Moreover, customer satisfaction successfully mediates perceived service quality, price fairness, justice to service recovery and relational bonds. However, corporate image does not moderate the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Meanwhile, perceived service quality and relational bonds to loyalty relationship are important to the stayer- users, while price fairness and justice to service recovery are important to switchers. The present study has also suggested some theoretical and practical contributions.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, service quality, stayers and switchers, telecom sector.
ABSTRAK


Kata Kunci: Kesetiaan pelanggan, kualiti perkhidmatan, Stayers and Switchers, sektor telekom
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE i
PERMISSION TO USE ii
ABSTRACT iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT iv
TABLES OF CONTENTS v
LIST OF TABLES xii
LIST OF FIGURE xiv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Background of the Study 1
1.2 Problem Statement 12
1.3 Research Questions 20
1.4 Research Objectives 21
1.5 Significance of the Study 22
1.6 Scope of Study 24
1.7 Definitions of key Terms 25
1.8 Organization of the Study 26
1.9 Summary 27

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW 28
2.1 Introduction 28
2.2 Overview of the Telecom Sector 28
2.3 Customer Loyalty 36
   2.3.1 Conceptualization of Customer Loyalty 37
   2.3.2 Measurement of customer Loyalty 38
2.4 Research Theoretical Background 41
   2.4.1 Oliver Four Stage Model 44
2.5 Expectation-Disconfirmation Model 47

vi
2.6 Reciprocity Theory 50
2.7 Factors affecting in telecom sector 54
2.8 Antecedents of Loyalty in direct relationship 57
2.9 Perceived service quality 58
2.9.1 Conceptualization of Perceived service Quality 59
2.9.2 Studies based on Perceived Service Quality and Customer Loyalty 61
2.9.3 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction 66

2.10 Perceived Price Fairness 66
2.10.1 Conceptualization of Price Fairness 68
2.10.2 Studies on Price Fairness and Customer Loyalty 70
2.10.3 Perceived Price Fairness and Customer Satisfaction 73

2.11 Perceived justice in Service Recovery 75
2.11.1 Conceptualization of Perceived Justice with Service Recovery 77
2.11.1.1 Procedural Justice 77
2.11.1.2 Interactional Justice 78
2.11.1.3 Distributive Justice 78
2.11.2 Studies on Perceived Justice with Service Recovery and CL 79
2.11.3 Perceived justice with Service Recovery and CS 82

2.12 Relational Bonds 83
2.12.1 Conceptualization of JSR 83
2.12.2 Dimensions of Relational Bonds 87
2.12.3 Studies on Relational Bonds and Customer Loyalty 90
2.12.4 Relational Bonds and Customer Satisfaction 94

2.13 Customer Satisfaction 95
2.13.1 Customer satisfaction and Loyalty 97
2.13.2 Customer Satisfaction as a mediator 101

2.14 Corporate Image as Moderator 104
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

3.2 Research Framework

3.3 Research Hypothesis

3.3.1 Relationship between PSQ, PF, JSR, RB and CL

3.3.2 Relationship between PSQ, PF, JSR, RB and CS

3.3.3 Relationship between CS and CL

3.3.4 Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable to CL

3.3.5 Corporate Image as moderating variable between CS and CL

3.3.6 Differences in perception of loyalty determinants between stayers and switchers

3.4 Research Design

3.5 Operationalization of Variables

3.5.1 Customer Loyalty

3.5.2 Customer Satisfaction

3.5.3 Perceived Service Quality

3.5.4 Perceived Price Fairness

3.5.5 Perceived Justice with Service Recovery

3.5.6 Relational Bonds

3.5.7 Corporate Image

3.5.8 Measurement of customer profiles (Stayers and Switchers)

3.6 Measurement Scale/Instrumentation

3.7 Population of the Study

3.8 Sample Size
3.9 Sampling Method and Data Collection Process 152
3.10 Data Collection Strategy 153
3.11 Unit of Analysis 156
3.12 Reliability and Validity of Measures 156
3.13 Data analysis Strategy 158
3.14 Chapter Summary 163

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS 163
4.1 Introduction 163
4.2 Response rate 163
4.3 Test for non-response bias 165
4.4 Common method bias 167
4.5 Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis. 168
  4.5.1 Missing values 169
  4.5.2 Assessment and removal of outliers 170
4.6 Demographic profile 171
4.7 Descriptive Analysis 174
4.8 Assessment of PLS-SEM Path Model Results 175
  4.8.1 Individual items Reliability or indicator reliability 179
  4.8.2 Internal consistency reliability 180
  4.8.3 Convergent validity 181
  4.8.4 Validation of Formative Constructs 183
  4.8.5 Discriminate Validity. 184
4.9 Assessment of significance of the model 188
  4.9.1 Coefficient of determination (R2) 188
  4.9.2 Assessment of Effect size (f²) 189
  4.9.3 Assessment of predictive relevance (Q²) 190
4.10 Hypothesis Testing 191
4.11 Testing Mediation Effects
4.12 Analysis of Moderation effect
4.13 Comparison Study of Stayers and Switchers
4.14 Summary

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Research Objective one: To determine direct Relationship of PSQ, RB, JSR and RB with Customer Loyalty

5.3.1.1 The relationship between PSQ and CL
5.3.1.2 The relationship between PF and CL
5.3.1.3 The relationship between JSR and CL
5.3.1.4 The relationship between RB and CL

5.4 Objective two: Examine the relationship between PSQ, PF, JSR, and RB to CS (H5, H6, H7, H8)

5.4.1 The relationship between PSQ and CS
5.4.2 The relationship between PF and CS
5.4.3 The relationship between JSR and CS
5.4.4 The relationship between RB and CS
5.4.5 Direct relationship between CS and CL
5.4.6 Direct relationship between CI and CL

5.5 Research objective three: To determine the extent to which CS will perform Mediating role between PSQ, PF, JSR, & RB

5.5.1 Mediating role of CS between PSQ and CL
5.5.2 Mediating role of CS between PF and CL
5.5.3 Mediating role of CS between JSR and CL
5.5.4 Mediating role of CS between RB and CL

5.6 Objective Four: To examine the moderating role of Corporate image between CS and Customers' Loyalty
5.7 Objective Five: To compare the differences in perceptions between Stayers and switchers on antecedents of Loyalty

5.7.1 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for PSQ and CL relationship

5.7.2 Perceived differences within perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for PF and CL relationship

5.7.3 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers' and Switchers for JSR and CL relationship

5.7.4 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for RB and CL relationship

5.7.5 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for CS and CL relationship

5.7.6 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for CI and CL relationship

5.8 Perceived differences in perceptions of Stayers and Switchers for PSQ, PF, JSR, RB to CS relationship

5.9 Theoretical Contribution

5.10 Practical Contributions

5.11 Limitation of the study

5.12 Conclusion
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No.</th>
<th>Title of the Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.1</td>
<td>Data usage and Revenue Disparities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.2</td>
<td>Definitions of key terms</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1</td>
<td>Telecom Revenue (Pakistan Ruppes RS (mil)) During last 5 years (2013-2017)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2</td>
<td>Cellular voice tariff (price) Per Minute (in Rs)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.3</td>
<td>ARPU ($) (where Telenor operates)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.4</td>
<td>Summary of Studies on Oliver four stage model as underpinnings</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.5</td>
<td>Summary of studies on EDM as underpinnings</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.6</td>
<td>Summary of studies on customer loyalty in Telecom sectors</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.7</td>
<td>Summary of studies on perceived service quality and loyalty in Telecom sectors</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.8</td>
<td>Summary of studies on price fairness and customer loyalty</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.9</td>
<td>Summary of studies on Perceived Justice in service recovery and customer loyalty</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.10</td>
<td>Summary of studies on Relational Bonds</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.11</td>
<td>Summary of studies on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Telecom sectors</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.12</td>
<td>Summary of studies on Stayers and Switchers in non-telecommunication sector</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.13</td>
<td>Summary of studies on Stayers and Switchers in Telecommunication sector</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Customer loyalty construct</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction construct</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3</td>
<td>Perceived service quality construct</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.4</td>
<td>Price fairness construct</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.5</td>
<td>Perceived Justice in service recovery construct</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.6</td>
<td>Relational bonds construct</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.7</td>
<td>Corporate image construct</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.8</td>
<td>Summary of constructs and items</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.9</td>
<td>Growth of prepaid subscribers (2005-2016)</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.10</td>
<td>Composition of prepaid mobile subscriber’s operator wise as of September 2016</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.11</td>
<td>Customer care centers of all telecom operators province wise</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.12</td>
<td>Determination of sample size of given population</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.13</td>
<td>City wise Proportionate sample size</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.14</td>
<td>Pilot study’s Reliability Results</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Response rate of the questionnaire</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 Demographic Profile 172
Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of latent constructs 175
Table 4.5 Measures and threshold values for assessment of measurement model 180
Table 4.6 Items loadings, composite Reliability and AVE Values 183
Table 4.7 Outer weights, VIF, T-values of formative constructs 185
Table 4.8 Discriminate validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion 186
Table 4.9 Cross Loading 187
Table 4.10 R-Squared values vales for the latent endogenous variables 190
Table 4.11 Effect sizes f² 191
Table 4.12 Results of predictive relevance (Q²) 192
Table 4.13 Direct relationship 193
Table 4.14 Results of Mediation Tests 196
Table 4.15 Moderation analysis 199
Table 4.16 Hypothetical differences between Stayers and Switchers 202
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure No</th>
<th>Title of Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Global mobile/cellular subscription</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.2</td>
<td>Subscribers Growth in Pakistan Telecom sector</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.3</td>
<td>Cellular voice tariff (price) in Pakistani Rupees (Rs)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Oliver, 1999 four stage model</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Expectancy-Confirmation/Disconfirmation Model</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Dimensions of price fairness extracted from the related theories</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Research Framework</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Two Step Process of PLS Path Model Assessment</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Measurement Model</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>PLS-SEM Bootstrapping Indirect Relationship</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>PLS-SEM Algorithm Moderators</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5</td>
<td>PLS-SEM Algorithm for Stayer users</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.6</td>
<td>PLS-SEM Algorithm for switchers</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Over the last two decades, the world's businesses have shifted its focus from the industrial to consumer services. In terms of growth, the business category with the highest growth is Telecommunication and ICT followed by Banking and other services sector, which recorded a 6% annual growth rate between 2008 and 2016. The telecommunication sector is a distinctive industry in many ways, particularly as it has undergone tremendous changes since its inception in 1875. In fact, it is not exaggerating to state that the industry has played a vital role in many ways. It has contributed significantly towards the National GDP as it has become a major source of employment. Furthermore, ICT has also helped the preservation of social ties among people across the globe (Galperin & Mariscal, 2007; Nimako, 2012; Shrivastava & Israel, 2010). In this regard, since the early 1990s, the global demand for mobile communication services, including voice telephony; text messaging and mobile internet access have grown substantially (Lange & Saric, 2016). This increasing global demand for MCS (Mobile Communication Services) has started a stiff rivalry between different mobile network providers (MNPs) as newcomers compete to break the long-standing monopoly of a particular service provider in the sector in countries (Savin, 2017).

On the other hand, the market development of mobile communication service is often measured through the level of market penetration over the last few years (ITU, 2017b). There are more than 7.50 billion active cellular subscriptions, representing a penetration rate of more than 97% globally (see figure 1.1). The largest proportion of
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269


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bound of the phi coefficient for dichotomous items. Behavior research
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347


