

An Evaluation of GSM Sector Parameters in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Muhammad Anwar¹ & Tan Shamal² & Bawar Azad² & Shram Sarkawt²

¹ Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq

² Independent Author, Sulaimani, Iraq

Correspondence: Muhammad Anwar, Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq.

Email: muhammed.anwar@ishik.edu.iq

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Abstract: This study aimed to analyse the effect of service quality and price to corporate, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty of mobile telecommunications services in the city of Sulaymaniyah. The aim of this study is to determine and analyse the perception of the people about the GSM operators. Research conducted on peoples living in the city by setting a sample of 515 respondents. Data were analysed using covariance and correlation analysis and also regression analysis. The results show us that the loyalty of a customer to a GSM operator significantly depends on the trust, corporate image, and satisfaction of the customers.

Keywords: GSM, Telecommunication, Customer Loyalty, Corporate Image, Service Quality, Trust, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Mobile telecommunication is a vital tool for the community and has a very important role. But nowadays GSM, which stands for global system for mobile communication have been developed rapidly. People now focus on using internet networks to communicate and this situation has impacted the users of telecommunication providers.

In the recent market where internet nearly dominated the communication ways, it's very important and necessary to provide good service, quality and also reasonable prices for people in order to make people be loyal to the brand; this can be a good strategy in order to have a competitive advantage also a positive image and reputation. A successful mobile telecommunication provider not only sees a one-sided but is done also by analyzing from several sides, such as; high-quality services at affordable prices which are the desire of the customer.

In order to meet customer expectation, this paper will evaluate some factors which are a corporate image, trust, customer loyalty, and satisfaction by showing how it can affect people's perception about GSM operator. This study offers a unique contribution to the mobile communication research by providing empirical evidence of users' perception of service quality.

2. Literature Review

Determining service quality based on different factors have been studied since long ago, nowadays service quality can be found in everywhere all around the world and can be determined and examined through different researches and based on different factors. One of the most important sectors in business that can be determined through its service quality and the factors that effect on it is “telecommunication sector” which is one of the most popular sectors today. This study proposed that 8 factors which are service quality, pricing structure, promotions, switching cost, corporate image, trust, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction are vital to be examined in order to determine a service quality of a telecommunication company and through that results it can be found which of this factors affect more on the customers and drive them to be a long-term customer and loyal to a specific company. Several attempts have been made during past few years to determine the mentioned factors in various industries along with telecommunication industry across the globe. And this paper will mention the literatures that have been reviewed on them.

2.1 Service Quality

Service quality is one factor used by consumers to buy a product in the form of goods or services, in which a product can be compared with its competitors based on its quality (Demir, Talaat, & Aydinli, 2015). The values given customer, very strong based on the factors of service quality. Where the quality of a product or service is the extent to which products or services meet the specifications (Demir & Mustafa, 2017). The success of an action is determined by the quality of the services. Quality is the highest appreciation of the acts of service. The quality of a match, which means the use of goods or services in order to meet customer needs. It has already been proved that the services quality has a positive and significant effect on the corporate image (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). Moreover, it can also be said that that the service quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction (Tjiptono & Diana, 2001; Wendha et al., 2013; Sia & Subagio, 2013; Demir, 2017). Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined service quality as “the overall evaluation of a specific service firm that results from comparing that firm’s performance with the customers” general expectations of how firms in that industry should perform. Customer satisfaction is positively related to the loyalty (Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2009; Demir & Eray, 2015, Demir & Aydinli, 2016).

2.2 Pricing Structure

Price has a very important role in influencing consumer decisions to buy products, so as to determine the success of marketing a product. Price can be defined as the money that charged for a product or service, or the value exchanged with the consumers on the benefits for owning or using a product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). When a customer looks at a price, can evaluate it as high, low, or reasonable and may intend or not purchase. It can be understood from here that consumer assesses how the service or product is reasonable as a price is highly dependent on how to vote (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). From here, it comes out that the price impacts the loyalty, too (Toro, 2012). This means that as the company providing reasonable prices there might be more loyal customers.

2.3 Corporate Image

The image is the general perception of society about a company or its services. Corporate image is the result of a collection of processes in which consumers compare the various attributes of the company. Attributes are meant for example a product, price, product quality, and service quality. Consumer's image is where the company will make a subjective perception of the company and all its activities. This perception will most probably differ from one customer to another based on their experience with the same service or product (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2005). Previous studies have proven that the corporate image significantly impacts the customer loyalty (Rahyuda & Atmaja, 2017; Hu & Huang, 2011). Corporate image is a vital indicator that influences the perceived quality of customer, evaluates customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

2.4 Promotion

Promotion is the ability that a company provides some incentives and extra services to the customers in order to serve them better and make them satisfied and loyal. The importance and benefits of promotions to organizations to sell their products/services have been studied by various studies previously. Promotions attract the attention of the customers, triggers consumer to buy, introduces the new product to them and persuade them to buy the concerning product instead of competitors' products (Galbraith 1963). Few studies have studied that higher spending on promotions leads to higher awareness and highly advertised brands create a perception of better quality. Just a couple of studies have been proposed in the telecommunication sector; with respect to the impact of promotion spend on sales performance (Sujata, Sandeep, & Abhijit, 2016).

2.5 Switching Cost

Switching cost can be defined as the cost that customer perceives s/he will face in case of changing a service to one another. For GSM services, switching cost can be defined that customers perceive s/he will face in case they change a GSM service provider to another one. However, this cost is psychological as well as tangible cost. Jackson and Bund (1985) stated that "the combination of financial, psychological and physical costs". Switching cost is not only the financial cost but also the cost that customer will use energy, time, and extra effort as procedures to change service. Economical switching cost or financial switching cost is "sunk cost", and they occur in case of changing operator. On the other hand, psychological cost refers to what the customer will perceive when they change a service which is known to them to an unknown operator. It influences the users' perception about service prices so that; it might be thought for companies as an advantage not to lose so many customers suddenly. Klemperer (1987) has divided switching cost into three parts; Learning costs which are the energy that customer compares the new product with the old one by means to reach the same or more satisfaction. Contractual costs are created by companies about the penalties in case of withdrawal, extra opportunities...etc. Transaction costs occur by the time of changing service provider.

2.6 Trust

Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined it as “Trust is an important factor in the development of marketing relationships and exists when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity”. However, Ballester and Aleman (2001) stated that trust has a direct impact on the satisfaction of a customer. Further, Anderson and Narus (1990) say that trust comes out when a customer perceives the security in policies, and reliability of the concerning service. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) “Good relationship among stakeholders is resulted in the trust by having cooperation with stakeholders”. Furthermore, it can be concluded that trust at the same time is linked directly to the switching costs

2.7 Loyalty

Brand loyalty has started to be discussed from the 1920s on (Bennett 2001). Customer loyalty can be explained as continuous purchase of a customer from the same brand (Tjiptono, 2000). When a customer is loyal to a brand, the repurchase behavior from the same firm doesn't change (Ramli & Sjahruddin, 2015). Loyalty occurs when a customer shows a good attitude to repurchase the same service, product, good, manufacturing...etc. (Widjaja, 2008). Previous studies show that customers are satisfied with the service quality and this satisfaction drives them to the loyalty (Chotivanich, 2014). It can also be said that the price and service quality brings loyalty through customer satisfaction (Basir et al., 2015). According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love impacts positive word of mouth also.

2.8 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the consumer response to the evaluation of the perception of the difference between the initial expectations or certain performance standards and actual performance as perceived product after product consumption. Conversely, if the performance of a service or product confirms the expectation of the customer, they will most probably feel satisfied (Tse & Wilton, 1988). Satisfaction is fulfilling the gap between expectations and real outputs (Ramli & Sjahruddin, 2015). From this point of view, customer satisfaction triggers customer loyalty (Michael, 2010; Mahmud et al., 2011; Wendha et al., 2013; Chotivanich, 2014). Literature shows us that customer satisfaction is a dominant factor for the customer loyalty (Spreng et al., 1996). According to Bloamer and Kasper (1995) also claimed that brand loyalty had a significant relation with the customer satisfaction.

3. Methodology

In the present study, a survey questionnaire was used to collect the data. Research questionnaire consisted of two sections demographic question and main questions totally including (48) questions in a way that (7) questions were related to the demographic section and (41) questions were related to the main questions. The questions were responded by using a 5-point like a scale from strongly negative to strongly positive. Information was collected in April 2018 and a statistical population of these study consisted of everyone who is living in Sulaymaniyah city. The sample size consists of (515) which were filled out by the people. In order to analyze the relationship among the variables and determine the strengths of the relation covariance and correlation analysis is used and also regression analysis is used

to understand either the impact that variables have on each other is significant or not by looking at the value of t-stat and its judged that if the value is more than 1.96 and less than -1.96 is said to be significant.

3.1 Covariance and Correlation

Covariance and Correlation are commonly proposed in business statistics. Moreover, they determine the relationship and measure how strongly dependent variable is linked with the independent one. According to those calculations, two variables may have in positive, negative, or in no relation to each other. They also calculate how significant the concerning relationship is. An the same time, they measure a wide variety of relationship and significance with one another. How high value (in positive relation) and how small (in negative relation) values are, that strong relations between variables are accounted. Finally, closeness to zero determines the weakness of the relationship while 0 means exactly no relationship between the two.

Table 1: Covariance and Correlation results

Variable 1	Variable 2	Covariance	Correlation	T-Stat
Network Quality	Corporate Image	0.32	0.40	22.98
Internet Quality	Corporate Image	0.22	0.30	22.09
Pricing Structure	Corporate Image	0.21	0.29	22.39
Inter-Operators Pricing Structure	Corporate Image	0.25	0.31	23.61
Promotions	Corporate Image	0.23	0.34	19.11
Switching Cost	Corporate Image	0.25	0.47	11.63
Conflict Handling	Corporate Image	0.38	0.52	18.51

Network Quality	Trust	0.20	0.23	23.13
Internet Quality	Trust	0.27	0.35	19.19
Pricing Structure	Trust	0.29	0.37	18.93
Inter-Operators Pricing Structure	Trust	0.29	0.34	20.87
Promotions	Trust	0.22	0.31	17.57
Switching Cost	Trust	0.25	0.42	10.88
Conflict Handling	Trust	0.42	0.54	15.91
Corporate Image	Satisfaction	0.32	0.44	19.95
Corporate Image	Customer Loyalty	0.34	0.55	13.54
Trust	Satisfaction	0.42	0.53	16.45
Trust	Customer Loyalty	0.40	0.59	10.69
Satisfaction	Customer Loyalty	0.46	0.59	6.65

The table above shows the covariance and correlation analysis between the variables, that's used to

measure the strengths of the variables either they are weak, moderate or strong.

Based on the results from the analysis it shows that the relations between variables are all a positive relation since the covariance coefficient of each variable is positive. corporate image is a perception of people about the quality of your company and it will stay like memory in each customer's mind, the results of this study shows that the relation between network quality and corporate image is a positive moderate relation with a correlation value of 0.40 and this two variables have at-stat value of 22.98 which shows that the impact that network quality have on corporate image is significant that's why it's important for a GSM operator company to have a positive image in order to stay in people's mind. Internet quality with corporate image has a weak positive relationship with a correlation value of 0.30 here also the value of t-stat is very high that causes the impact to be significant and make the GSM operator companies take the quality of their internet into consideration as one of the prior factors in determining the image of their company. Pricing structure and inter-operating pricing structure are the most crucial factors in determining the image of a company since the pricing decision can sometimes be fatal and lead to a bankruptcy of the company, this 2 factor has a significant impact with a value of 22.39 and 23.61 But also a weak Positive relation with a correlation value of 0.29 and 0.31 here a question can arise, why? Based on the results it could be that the perception of the people about the pricing structure is not positive and they find that the prices that the GSM operator companies are providing are not reasonable. The relation between promotion and corporate image is a weak positive relationship with a value of 0.34 but the impact that promotion has on the image of the company is significant with a value of 19.11 since it's important for every GSM operators to provide promotions to their users time to time for a better image. Another factor which also has a significant impact on the corporate image is switching cost with a value of 11.63 and the relation between these two factors is a positive moderate relation. When a company take care of its customer's problems and handle it so it means that corporate image of that company is good and they provide fast solutions for their conflicts that's why conflict handling has a significant impact on an image of a company with a value of 18.51 and this two factor has a positive moderate relation with correlation value of 0.52.

Trust plays a vital role in the customer's perception of quality and service when a company is trusted it means that they are providing high quality services. The results of this study shows that each factor have a significant impact on trust and the highest one is network quality, quality is very important especially when it's about GSM operators peoples need high quality of network in order to trust a GSM operator provider they need to see and examine how high the quality is in order to trust them, but the results of correlation analysis shows that the relation which trust have with the all the factors are weak to moderate this could explain that respondents to this survey were not actually trusting the GSM operator providers in Sulaimani.

There are other two main factors of this study which are satisfaction and customer loyalty, what happens if a customer has been satisfied with service and quality that have been provided for him/her, of course, this will make the customer be loyal to that brand or company and also this will be an advantage for the company to have a positive image and a lot of satisfied loyal customers, it's also same with GSM operators when a high quality of network and services with a reasonable price is provided to the customer and directly take care of each problem that happens with the service and solve them of course you will gain a lot satisfied loyal customer with increasing the positive image of the company that's why

both satisfaction and loyalty have a significant impact on corporate image with a value of 19.45 and 13.54.

When you want a customer to be loyal to your brand and be its every time users you need to satisfy them and earn them trust in order to make them loyal, this two factors also have a significant impact on trust with a value of 16.45 and 10.69 and positive moderate relation with a value of 0.53 and 0.59. of course satisfaction also have a significant impact on the customer loyalty and based on the whole results it's found that satisfaction and trust have the highest correlation values of 0.59 with customer loyalty and the second highest value is corporate image on customer loyalty with a value of 0.55

3.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is used when one wants to measure how dependent one variable to another. It calculates the coefficients in the linear method to determine the impact of the independent variable on the dependent one. One of the main occasions where such analysis is used is to understand the relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable. Regression analysis calculates the overall variance to show the ratio of reasons that can be explained by the concerning independent variable. The model is proposed in this research to elaborate impact of GSM service quality on the corporate image, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty of the customers. Further, the impacts of trust and corporate image on the satisfaction and loyalty also have been calculated with the same method.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results

Dependent Variable / Y	Independent Variable / X	R ²	T-Stat	Coefficient of Intercept	Coefficient of Independent	Equation
Corporate Image	Network Quality	0.16	22.98	2.09	0.29	Y=0.29X+2.09
Corporate Image	Internet Quality	0.09	22.09	2.25	0.24	Y=0.24X+2.25
Corporate Image	Pricing Structure	0.08	22.39	2.27	0.23	Y=0.23X+2.27
Corporate Image	Inter-Operators Pricing Structure	0.10	23.61	2.26	0.23	Y=0.23X+2.26

Corporate Image	Promotions	0.11	19.11	2.08	0.30	$Y=0.30X+2.08$
Corporate Image	Switching Cost	0.22	11.63	1.45	0.51	$Y=0.51X+1.45$
Corporate Image	Conflict Handling	0.27	18.51	1.72	0.41	$Y=0.41X+1.72$
Trust	Network Quality	0.05	23.13	2.43	0.18	$Y=0.18X+2.43$
Trust	Internet Quality	0.12	19.19	2.09	0.30	$Y=0.30X+2.09$
Trust	Pricing Structure	0.14	18.93	2.02	0.32	$Y=0.32X+2.02$
Trust	Inter-Operators Pricing Structure	0.12	20.87	2.15	0.28	$Y=0.28X+2.15$
Trust	Promotions	0.09	17.57	2.10	0.30	$Y=0.30X+2.10$
Trust	Switching Cost	0.18	10.88	1.52	0.50	$Y=0.50X+1.52$
Trust	Conflict Handling	0.29	15.91	1.59	0.47	$Y=0.47X+1.59$
Satisfaction	Corporate Image	0.19	19.95	1.92	0.35	$Y=0.35X+1.92$

Customer Loyalty	Corporate Image	0.30	13.54	1.43	0.52	$Y=0.52X+1.43$
Satisfaction	Trust	0.28	16.45	1.63	0.46	$Y=0.46X+1.63$
Customer Loyalty	Trust	0.35	10.69	1.18	0.61	$Y=0.61X+1.18$
Customer Loyalty	Satisfaction	0.35	6.65	0.84	0.70	$Y=0.70X+0.84$

The table above shows the results of regression analysis, this result shows how a corporate image of a GSM operator company can be determined by looking at the result of some dependent variables and also to measure the significance of the impact on each. Results show that both network and internet quality is important in determining the corporate image of a GSM operator in Sulaimani with a value of coefficient independent 0.29 and 0.24 and both factors have a significant impact.

Also, both pricing structure and inter-operator pricing structure determine the corporate image with coefficient 0.23 and their impact is also significant. The lowest coefficient of independent that determines trust is network quality which means that perception of customers about corporate image of a GSM operator company can be determined more by other factors than network quality. And the highest coefficient independent is 0.50 which means that switching cost is determining trust with 0.50 this is a very important point since someone who wants to change their sim cards or they want to switch to any other services they need to trust the company that they are switching to and calculate the costs and benefit of it. When determining satisfaction, trust plays a vital role with a coefficient independent of 0.46 and a significant impact. When it comes to customer loyalty both satisfaction and trust take the biggest role since coefficient independent of satisfaction is 0.70 and of trust is 0.61 with a significant impact.

4. Conclusion

The Purpose for conducting the applied study was to find out the perception of peoples about the quality of GSM operators in Sulaimani. For this study, we applied covariance and correlation analysis to determine and find the relationship between the variables and also regression analysis to determine how significantly are the impact of the independent variables on dependent ones. Results obtained from data analysis of covariance and correlation showed that the relationship of trust and satisfaction with customer loyalty is the highest among all of them which means that it's important for the GSM operator company to make people satisfied and earn trust so that they become a loyal customer. Also, the results of regression analysis showed the same results of satisfaction and trust with customer loyalty. These findings can be useful to be used as an advice for the GSM operators in real market to recognize their weak points in providing service and quality and help them to improve and develop their quality to

satisfy customers. Also, determine their strong points and work on them better and better and satisfy more customers to make them loyal to their brand. Practical contribution shows that this study can be used as a guideline to management and marketers to improve the service and network quality. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that customer loyalty towards service provider can be improved by focusing on satisfaction and trust in order to earn customer loyalty.

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