SUBSCRIBERS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS MOBILE COMMUNICATION SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT – A STUDY

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Introduction:

In this modern IT era, there is a rapid growth and innovation witnessed in the mobile industry. The communication field has greatly transformed. The traditional use of mobile phone is text messaging and calling. It has bridged a gap in distance communication. With the advancement of new technology, the way of communication is also changed. In ancient days, pigeons were used as means of communication. Later, written messages were sent through letters by post. As the time passed, telephone came into existence and today is the era of wireless communication which gives rise to mobile phones[1]. Mobiles are the latest invention and common way of communication. Now-a-days, continuing innovation in the mobile communication industry, such as mobile Internet and social networking applications such as Twitter, Face book, whatsapp etc have further had a measurable impact in the communication field[2]. The Mobile communication has become a force to reckon with in personal communication.

Statement of the Problem:

Mobile Communication is the part and parcel of economic life. Communication has traditionally been in the forefront of harnessing technology to communicate effectively. It has been using through wireless and latest technological communication networks for delivering a wide range of value added products and services (VAS) for a longer time. The most important factor for the economic development of a nation is its development in the infrastructure, which ultimately depends on the development in communication, transport and electricity. In communication system, there are so many modes are available. Among the various modes of communication, mobile communication plays a vital role in offering various communication services for the urban as well as rural area[3].

Apart from that, the survival of the mobile communication scheme in future depends on the ultimate satisfaction of the subscribers. This has led to following research questions,

✓ Has the mobile communication given satisfaction to the subscribers?
✓ What is the effective impact of communication on personal, demographic and rational variables on subscribers' satisfaction?
✓ What are the problems affecting subscribers' satisfaction?
✓ What is the level of subscriber satisfaction?

The problems can be better answered and suitable policies and strategies can be formulated, when a research has been conducted on these aspects. It has led to a

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International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education (IJCRME)
ISSN (Online): 2455 - 5428
(www.rdmodernresearch.com) Volume I, Issue I, 2016

scientific and thorough investigation of the mobile communication service. The above aspects are thoroughly investigated and the data were collected and critically analysed in the research work, to establish a useful strategy for the effective implementation of mobile tariff schemes. The present study tries to probe into the level of the satisfaction of subscribers towards mobile communication service.

Objectives of the Study:
- ✓ To identify the satisfaction level of subscribers towards mobile service providers in Thoothukudi District.
- ✓ To analyse the relationship between demographic factors and level of satisfaction of the subscribers in the study area.
- ✓ To give suggestions for the improvement of the quality in mobile communication service.

Scope of the Study:

The present study is primarily designed to study "A Study on Subscribers' Satisfaction with Mobile Communication Service Providers in Thoothukudi District". Mobile Communication Service providers play a vital role in the economic development of our country. This study has included the vast analysis about the subscribers' perception and satisfaction towards mobile communication service providers, purpose of using GPRS, preference of offers available for recharge, opinion about the services provided by MCS, satisfaction level of subscribers towards tariff charges, service offers, service quality and parameters, problem faced by subscribers while using services, satisfaction about customer care services. It helps the customers to identify the satisfaction level towards mobile communication service provider. This study focused on GSM services only. It helps the service providers to identify the needs and expectation of the customers.

Hypothesis:

The following null hypothesis is formed.

Ho: There is no significant association between Mobile subscribers' satisfaction model with overall satisfaction.

Methodology:

Methodology is the core for a good research work. In this part, the researcher has discussed area of study, period of study, collection of data, construction of questionnaire, pilot study.

Collection of Data:

The study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from sample respondents with the help of questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from websites, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Cellular Operators Authority of India (COAI), and printed from journals, books, magazines and newspapers.

Sampling Design:

Primary Data were collected through well framed questionnaire. The questionnaire was rearranged by the pilot study. The public sector includes BSNL and in private sector Aircel, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea have been selected on the basis of top five GSM service providers in the study area[4] by using stratified random sampling. 250 sample respondents have been selected from each service provider and the questionnaire was sent to 1250 (250×5) respondents' selected using simple random sampling method. From among the selected 1250 respondents 726 respondents are

http://www.telecomindiaonline.com/Indian-gsm- operators-2011-12.html

considered as sample respondents due to completeness of the questionnaire and the remaining 524 respondents were rejected due to incompleteness in filling questionnaire and few questionnaire were not returned back. From among the 726 respondents, 104 (BSNL) respondents are public and remaining 622 (Aircel- 224, Airtel- 212, Vodafone- 132 and Idea -54) respondents are private sector subscribers.

Tools Used in the Study:

The collected data were processed further with the help of the statistical tools namely mean, standard deviation, ranking, chi-square, one way ANOVA and t-test. The collected information was presented in a spread sheet and analysed it using SPSS 16.0 to bring out with a fine output result presented in a separate table.

Limitations:

✓ The area of the study is restricted to Thoothukudi district only.

✓ The study focused on GSM - prepaid subscribers.

✓ The changing conditions, preference and government policy do have any direct influence on the satisfaction of the subscribers.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: Satisfaction of the Subscribes Towards Subscribers' Satisfaction Model

Dimensions	Public Sector *(n=104)*				Private Sector *(n=622)*			
	Mean	S.D	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Service Offers	29.48	3.382	20	37	35.16	4.855	21	46
Service Tariff	16.90	2.157	11	22	17.64	3.759	8	27
Service Quality	13.43	1.624	7	17	14.01	2.203	7	19
Reduce Problems	7.99	2.022	4	13	9.63	2.278	4	16
Customer Care Service	15.43	1.989	9	20	14.94	2.050	6	20
Overall Satisfaction	83.24	5.726	67	98	91.37	8.162	66	113

Source: Computed Primary Data

There are ten important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service offers' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 10 and 50, with a neutral point of 30 (10 ×3 =30). The mean score of public sector below the natural point indicates dissatisfaction with service offers and the mean score of private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction with service offers.

There are six important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service tariff' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 6 and 30, with a neutral point of 18 (6 ×3 =18). The mean score of public sector and private sector below the natural point indicates dissatisfaction with service tariff.

There are four important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service quality' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 4 and 20, with a neutral point of 12 (4 ×3 =12). The mean score of public sector and private sector below the neutral point indicates dissatisfaction on service quality.

There are there important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'reduced problems' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 3 and 15, with a neutral point of 9 (3 ×3 =9). The mean score of public sector below the neutral point

International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education (IJCRME)
ISSN (Online): 2455 - 5428
(www.rdmodernresearch.com) Volume I, Issue I, 2016

indicates dissatisfaction with reduced problems and the mean score of private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction with reduced problems.

There are four important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'customer care service' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 4 and 20, with a neutral point of 12 (4 ×3 =12). The mean score of public sector and private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction on customer care service.

There are twenty seven important factors in the measurement of subscribers' overall satisfaction on the factor 'overall service' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 27 and 135, with a neutral point of 81 (27 ×3 = 81). The mean score of public sector and private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction on overall service.

It is inferred that public sector subscribers satisfied with customer care service but dissatisfied with service offers, service tariff, service quality and reduced problems whereas in private sector subscribers satisfied with service offers, reduced problem, customer care service but dissatisfied with service tariff and service quality. Overall both sector subscribers are satisfied with service.

Relationship Between Factors Determining Satisfaction and Overall Satisfaction:

To find out the significant relationship between factors determining satisfaction and overall satisfaction of respondents, the following hypothesis framed is "There is no significant association between factors determining satisfaction and overall satisfaction of respondents". The factors determining satisfaction includes service offers, service tariff, service quality, reduced problem and customer care service. For that chi- square test is used and the results are shown below table.

Ho: There is no significant association between Mobile subscribers' satisfaction model with overall satisfaction.

Table 2: Relationship between Factors determining Satisfaction and Overall Satisfaction

Particulars	Statistical Inference	Degrees of freedom	P Value	Results
Service Offers	X^2=355.412	1	.001 < 0.05	Significant
Service Tariff	X^2=119.996	1	.001 < 0.05	Significant
Service Quality	X^2=4.029	1	.045 < 0.05	Significant
Reduced Problems	X^2=104.247	1	.001 < 0.05	Significant
Customer Care Service	X^2=4.774	1	.029 < 0.05	Significant

Source: Computed Primary Data

From the table, it is evident that the calculated p value for service offers (0.001), service tariff (0.001), service quality (0.045), reduced problem (0.001) and customer care service (0.029) are less than the significance value (0.05) at 5 per cent level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is association between service offers, service tariff, service quality, reduced problem and customer care service and overall satisfaction. Thus, all the above mentioned five factors are important for determining the satisfaction of the respondents.

Summary of Findings:

The respondents' opinions, preference, level of satisfaction and factors affecting satisfaction are analysed and the findings are listed below.

✓ There are ten important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service offers' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 10 and 50, with a neutral point of 30 (10 ×3 =30). The mean score of public sector below the natural point

indicates dissatisfaction with service offers and the mean score of private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction with service offers.

✓ There are six important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service tariff' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 6 and 30, with a neutral point of 18 (6 ×3 =18). The mean score of public sector and private sector below the natural point indicates dissatisfaction with service tariff.

✓ There are four important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'service quality' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 4 and 20, with a neutral point of 12 (4 ×3 =12). The mean score of public sector and private sector below the neutral point indicates dissatisfaction on service quality.

✓ There are there important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'reduced problems' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 3 and 15, with a neutral point of 9 (3 ×3 =9). The mean score of public sector below the neutral point indicates dissatisfaction with reduced problems and the mean score of private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction with reduced problems.

✓ There are four important factors in the measurement of subscribers' satisfaction on the factor 'customer care service' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 4 and 20, with a neutral point of 12 (4 ×3 =12). The mean score of public sector and private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction on customer care service.

✓ There are twenty seven important factors in the measurement of subscribers' overall satisfaction on the factor 'overall service' with the score of any item ranging between 1 and 5; the total scores on the instrument ranging between 27 and 135, with a neutral point of 81 (27 ×3 = 81). The mean score of public sector and private sector above the neutral point indicates satisfaction on overall service.

✓ It is inferred that public sector subscribers satisfied with customer care service but dissatisfied with service offers, service tariff, service quality and reduced problems whereas in private sector subscribers satisfied with service offers, reduced problem, customer care service but dissatisfied with service tariff and service quality. Overall both sector subscribers are satisfied with service.

✓ It is evident that the calculated p value for service offers (0.001), service tariff (0.001), service quality (0.045), reduced problem (0.001) and customer care service (0.029) are less than the significance value (0.05) at 5 per cent level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is association between service offers, service tariff, service quality, reduced problem and customer care service and overall satisfaction. Thus, all the above mentioned five factors are important for determining the satisfaction of the respondents.

Suggestions:

This will enable the service provider to understand at which point the subscribers are not satisfied on services offered by the service providers. Based on research the following suggestions are given to service providers.

International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education (IJCRME)
ISSN (Online): 2455 - 5428
(www.rdmodernresearch.com) Volume I, Issue I, 2016

To Service Provider:

✓ The service providers can provide schemes like ARC i.e. Automatic Recharge Center, where the subscribers can recharge their account easily and directly. This facility may be in the form of physical distribution or automatic computerized system.

✓ The customer care service should intimate the subscribers regarding any deduction. Without the knowledge of the subscribers, no single rupee should be deducted. The intimation may be in the form of SMS or Call through which proper acceptance for activation of Value Added Service (VAS). The details of the charging should be given as per the subscribers' request.

✓ The public sector service provider should give more offers/ awareness and make the availability of more recharge cards at various places.

✓ The service provider should give special festival SMS offers to the subscribers who activated SMS booster (ex. minimum 10 SMS at free of cost).

✓ The service provider should take steps for immediate delivery of SMS to increase the quality of the SMS, especially public service sector.

✓ The service provider can improve the clarity of signal and connection of network by installing more towers in rural and urban areas.

✓ The service provider can appoint more customer care agents to get immediate response and service from customers care services.

✓ There is a difference between gender and satisfaction level. So, the service provider should provide various schemes and offers based on gender to satisfy them.

✓ As there is a difference in age group towards satisfaction, it is better to offer different types of offers based on age. For example, youth may like more SMS offers, new movie and songs downloading and high speed interest and the age old people may like low call charges, old songs downloading and free calls.

✓ The service provider should categorise the subscribers on the basis of education and occupation and provide separate schemes and offers based on education and occupation.

✓ The service provider should introduce new schemes and offers for the subscribers based on their nativity.

✓ The service provider should offers some offers based on the type of family and size of family. (1+1 SIM or group free talks SIM. etc).

✓ The service provider should give additional offers to the long time subscribers to retain the subscribers for a longer time. Because, in the initial period or at the time of purchasing a new SIM, more offers are given by the service provider to the subscribers but service provider fail to give more offers and retain the subscribers for a longer time. So, the service provider should give more additional offers to the long time subscribers.

✓ The service provider should provide offers at affordable cost on which all schemes and offers should be utilized by all categories of income group.

Conclusion:

Now a days, mobile communication is becoming the life blood of all human begins. To make communication much easier and faster tele-communication system is adopted. Really, it is tremendous because it converts the globe into a village. It makes everything in our finger point; we can communicate with people throughout the world. Always there is a thought that, "Every situation has two sides like coin" i.e. everything has its advantages and disadvantages. Likewise, communication also has two sides;

International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education (IJCRME)
ISSN (Online): 2455 - 5428
(www.rdmodernresearch.com) Volume I, Issue I, 2016

whatever may be the reason, yet the advantages are more in communication system. It reaches the peak of satisfaction from the subscribers overall and in future.

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