

Gender Specific Study On Relative Impact Of Convenience And Non- Convenience Factors On Mobile Users' Brand Switching In Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

Switching behavior, irrespective of the product and services is not uncommon in the present-day context, where loyalty has become uncertain. While the same applies in case of mobile users, causes could be varied and many of those have already been identified that contribute to such an act. What is not clearly explored is the gender-specific profile of this switching behavior in case of mobile users. Research focusing on business-to-business relationships is likely to be male dominated and deal with male-male relationships. As such, it may not apply equally to other types of relationships (female-male or female-female). Similarly, most research in consumer relationship marketing is based on theoretical frameworks developed in western cultures. It is quite possible that the benefits received, or their importance, in firm-consumer relationships may be very different when considered in other cultural contexts. This paper fills a gap in the current thinking about how to identify the consumers who engage themselves in relational behavior by considering these missing links, particularly while viewed in the Indian context and subsequent identification of the key factors that drive the switching behavior. The study has been conducted with the following objective in focus, namely, identification of relative importance of key factors (convenience and other than convenience, i.e., Price, Service Provider's Indifference & nothing specific (clubbed together as 'Other than Convenience') influencing the consumers into the act of switching the service provider, exploring how the switching behavior varies between the genders. The study was conducted during June – July 2010.

Keywords: Switching Behavior, VAS, Customer Loyalty, Advocacy, Convenience Specific Factors, Blue Ocean Strategy

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Switching behavior, irrespective of product and services, is not uncommon in the present-day context of uncertain loyalty. While the same applies in the case of mobile users, the causes could be varied and many of those are already identified that contribute to such an act. Researchers studying customer satisfaction related to retention behavior in wireless service markets identified three pertinent factors — call quality, price and customer support. In a telephone survey of wireless service customers in Germany, Gerpott et al. (2001) found that network quality and price were significant in affecting customer satisfaction, but not customer support, while Kim et al. (2004) in a survey of South Korean customers found that call quality, value-added services and customer support were significant, but not price, handset, and convenience in procedures. Berry (1995) mentioned that quality of services, increased recognition of the potential benefits for the firm and also for the customers, along with technological advances were the main contributors of trust in Services Marketing.

What is not clearly explored is the gender-specific profile of this switching behavior in case of mobile users. Gender and culture are introduced as key considerations when segmenting consumers along the transactional/relational continuum. Theories and ideas that have been developed in using primarily western male subjects cannot necessarily be applied to all persons or all cultures (Gilligan, 1982). Research focusing on business-to-business relationships is likely to be male dominated and deal with male-male relationships. As such, it may not apply equally to other types of relationships (female-male or female-female). Similarly, most research in consumer relationship marketing is based on theoretical frameworks developed in western cultures (Arnold & Bianchi, 2001). It is quite possible that the benefits received, or their importance, in firm-consumer relationships may be very different when considered in other cultural contexts. This paper fills a gap in the current thinking about how to identify consumers who are more likely to engage in relational behavior by considering these missing links, particularly while viewed in the Indian context. The first contribution of the present study is that it builds on the existing consumer relationship marketing literature by providing insight into the characteristics of relational consumers, an issue requiring further research as suggested by Berry (1995). Second, a conceptual framework with several propositions for future testing is proposed. By linking gender and cultural variables to relational marketing, there are research papers that add to the existing theory on

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Table 1 : Gender Specific Values of SMS VAS Services Utilization				
SMS VAS Services	Male%	Female%	Male Index	Female Index
SMS VAS Subscribers	52.1	47.9	100	100
News	60.7	39.3	117	82
Sports	63.4	36.6	122	76
Astrology	49.7	50.3	95	105
Jokes	52.4	47.6	101	99
Stocks/Finance	63	37	121	77
Health Tips	54.5	45.5	105	95
Chat	57.8	42.2	111	88
Movies	53.3	46.7	102	97
Jobs	52.8	47.2	101	99
Spiritual	47.9	52.1	92	109
Love tips	61.9	38.1	119	80
Source: Smile of India, Education Portal				

relationship marketing in the ambit of mobile users. Gender specific differences on the usage profile of mobile SMS & Value Added Services (VAS) throw some light in the context of the present study (Table 1). However, elaborate literature survey also corroborates much of the related works carried out in the gamut of gender specific consumer behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the switching loyalty in the gender specific context, an exhaustive literature survey was conducted covering national and international research works. Studies reveal different dimensions of switching behavior considering consumer products, services, as well as mobile phones broaching on the subject of Relationship Marketing, Consumer Behavior etc.

Singla (2010) conducted a study to investigate & understand the behavior of consumers of mobile phones in Ludhiana & Sangrur District of Punjab, and to further capture their satisfaction level that is influenced by various technical & non - technical factors. The study indicated that while price & features are the most influential factors affecting the purchase of a new mobile phone, its price, audibility, network accessibility are also regarded as the most important factors in the choice of the mobile phones. The prime objective of the study was to understand the difference in the importance given by different gender groups to the selected factors while buying mobile handsets. The study concluded that 57% of the male respondents gave importance to quality of mobile handsets followed by price, features, brand & style of mobile handsets.

Research conducted by Mittal and Kamakura (2001); Gordon, McKeage and Fox (1998); Homburg and Giering, (2001) showed the importance of customer characteristics like age, gender and income. Gordon, McKeage and Fox (1998) found the pure moderating effect of gender in regards to involvement towards loyalty.

Dissanayake & Wanninayake 's (2008) study focused on the switching behavior of prepaid customers, and 150 respondents were selected under stratified probability sampling method in Sri Lanka. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with Likert scale. Two sets of independent variables were identified - namely service failure factors and value proposition factors. An inferential statistical analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The "Logit Regression Model" was used to test the three hypotheses developed to test the switching behavior impacted by service failure and value proposition factors. Data analysis revealed that the value proposition factors had more impact on brand switching behavior than service failure factors. However, both value proposition and service failure factors were not found to have a significant impact on switching behavior among pre-paid customers.

Mallikarjuna, Mohan & Kumar (2011) conducted a study on employment of discriminant function analysis and independent-samples t-test to identify the key differentiating factors that discriminate brand loyal customers from switchers among the mobile users in the AP telecom circle of India. Satisfaction of customers with network access, call

tariffs, customer care, network coverage and use of mobiles for voice calls or MMS were found have strong discriminating power between the loyal customers and switchers. Mobile operators in India have to invest in network and technology to improve the coverage, connectivity and speed. The researchers suggested that improvement in the quality of basic service – the voice calls will prove to be an excellent strategy for enhancing customer loyalty.

Aamir et al. (2010) conducted a study on customer satisfaction parameters in Pakistan by analyzing the relationship claims made by mobile service providers and customers' perception / trust after use. It focused on the following dimensions of customer satisfaction and trust, for example, **a)** Average mobile expenditure of the customers on mobile phone usage per month; **b)** Duration for the current usage of a particular brand; **c)** Level of customers' satisfaction with their mobile phone service providers; **d)** Future intentions of the customers regarding switching or retaining their brand, etc.

Twomey (2008) conducted a study to identify hysteresis in the switching patterns of consumers in the Irish mobile phone industry. It was not until the introduction by the Communication Regulator of full-number portability that consumers began to take advantage of the savings that switching mobile phone operators could produce. As with most relatively new industries, the awareness of savings is clouded by a lack of understanding of what is on offer and an underlying fear of change from something they have just started to comprehend. With people changing company loyalties more frequently than ever at the prospect of better, more cost-efficient services, it is now the million euro question for the phone companies on how close they should match each others' offers to maximize their profits, and what their best pricing strategy should be to obtain an even larger share of the market. Through the use of experimental economics and by modelling switching behavior using the Preisach model, along with observed and market data suggested that the average customer is misguided and misinformed in his/her decision to switch to bill pay. More realistically though, one can attribute this unexpected result to the enhanced services and mobile phone subsidies that a customer receives as a bill-pay customer.

Using research with data from Slovenia, Pirc (2006) studied the impact of usage, budgetary constraints, involvement and customer characteristics on customers' intention to switch mobile service providers. By using the consumption system perspective on mobile services and mobile phones, there was an attempt to provide an explanation on the factors of customer switching. It was shown that the mobile services usage effect on switching intentions is curvilinear (positive linear and negative quadratic) and that only the budgetary constraint regarding the service matters and not the one related to the mobile phone. Past mobile service providers switching experience also contributes to the intention to switch. Mobile phone ego involvement has a positive impact on customer retention, however, purchase involvement (both mobile phone and mobile services) increases customer risk.

Palen, Salzman & Youngs's (1999) study was conducted in which 19 new mobile phone users were closely tracked for the first six weeks after service acquisition. Results showed that new users tend to rapidly modify their perceptions of social appropriateness around mobile phone use, that actual nature of use frequently differs from what users initially predict, and that comprehension of service-oriented technologies can be problematic. They described instances and features of mobile telephony practice. When in use, mobile phones occupy multiple social spaces simultaneously, spaces with norms that sometimes conflict: the physical space of the mobile phone user and the virtual space of the conversation.

Ranganathan, Seo & Babad (2006) examined the switching behavior of mobile users who were not under any contractual obligations to stay with a provider. Drawing upon the literature on relationship marketing and switching costs, the study examined if the relational investments made by mobile users in a user-provider relationship and demographics influenced their switching behavior. Based on data of over 30,590 mobile users, there was an examination of the research questions. Statistical analysis supports significant associations between mobile users' service usage, service bundling and their switching behavior. Support was also found for the influence of age and gender on mobile user switching.

Bang (2008) in his study showed that married women with consumption behavior of achievement expression are both calculating consumers and emotionally loyal consumers. They go up to a higher-level of brand loyalty of being the emotionally loyal consumer, only subject to the fulfillment of their comparing a brand with other competing ones. Thus, they belong to a critical segment that has the potential and willingness to step forward to higher brand loyalty.

Rajasekar & Deo's (2011) study was conducted **a)** To analyze the factors which contribute to the satisfaction level of the customers of mobile phones ; **b)** To understand the effectiveness of the Sales Promotional Activities of mobile

phone companies and the offers provided by the companies; **c)** To examine the customers' attitude towards mobile connection providers and which factors motivate them to select a brand.

Oyeniya & Abolaji's (2010) study was conducted to find the relationship between customer services on customer retention in telecommunication industry in Nigeria. If retention is not managed, the customer's loyalty may be lost. There was an examination into the potential constructs in customer retention by investigating the chain of effects of retention from customer service, satisfaction, value and behavioral intention. The hypotheses were supported, except that a higher level of customer satisfaction does not lead to customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. It is assumed that when the customer is satisfied, then loyalty towards the telecom company is strengthened. Their results further showed that the respondents in their study have a positive impression towards their telecom company's ability to meet their changing needs.

Sathish, Naveen & Jeevanantham's (2011) research work was based upon a study on 'Consumer Switching Behavior In Cellular Service Providers : A Study With Reference To Chennai', the research was undertaken with respect to be extended to other geographical areas as well to study the usage of mobile services of different age groups so that new plans could be formulated. Their study revealed that call rates play the most important role in switching the service provider followed by network coverage, value added services and customer care. Advertisements played the least important role. It was found that there is a relation between switching the service provider and the factors (customer service, service problem, usage cost, etc.). After analyzing the findings of the study, it was suggested that cellular service providers should concentrate more on increasing network stability and setting tariff rates competitively. The findings also suggested that managers of the mobile operators should shift focus on building corporate image and analyze more carefully, the reasons for consumers to switch brands in this industry in order to increase loyalty among these consumers.

To have a deeper understanding of the behavior of mobile users, Sengupta & Chakraborty (2008) undertook a study taking into consideration the users from Kolkata. Mobile phone service providers must understand the relationship between demographic profiles of their customers and brand choice of their existing service providers. Their detailed study covered important demographic variables of customers affecting brand switching of customers, highlighting the pertinent aspects of prediction of switching proclivity of customers from one service provider to another. Another research by the same authors explored changing customers' need, attitude and behavior towards mobile phone services in order to compete efficiently for the market. The objective of their study was to understand the nature and importance of quality, flexibility, perceived value and price in generating satisfaction in the minds of Indian customers. A sample survey was conducted during June-July 2010 with 277 respondents from the city of Kolkata, where 19 items were selected to measure their expectations and attitudes towards the current brand of service providers. Suitable multivariate techniques were applied to infer important determinants and possible segmentations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

According to Sarantakos (1998), writers usually refer to the various aims out of which the following are considered for this study:

- 1)** To 'understand' human behavior and action.
- 2)** To make 'predictions'.
- 3)** To 'develop' and/or 'test theories'.

These are the generalized objectives, which have evolved and have been clarified in the process of the study. More significant objectives are the ones related to switching behavior, which has much to do with the loyalty of the customer. Despite the importance of consumer loyalty on the one hand (Oliver, 1999; Rust, Zeithaml, and Lemon, 2002), and gender differences in consumer behaviour (e.g., Brunel and Nelson, 2000; Fisher and Dubé, 2005; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001) on the other hand, little is known about the existence and nature of gender differences on consumer loyalty. Over the years, researchers have investigated many antecedents of customer loyalty to stores, companies and brands (Dick and Basu, 1994; Johnson, Herrmann and Huber, 2006; Oliver, 1999). Other researchers have documented the nature of loyalty relationships (Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Muñoz and O'Guinn, 2001). Despite the popularity of consumer loyalty as a research topic, systematic investigation of the role of gender in consumer loyalty is rare to find. Therefore, more general theories regarding gender differences were followed. Studies conducted

to identify gender-specific differences in consumer behavior are available, but are not specific in the areas of mobile service providers' switching behavior. The present study is an endeavor to identify the gender-specific differences, if any, in the areas of mobile service provider switching. The key objectives of the study are as follows:

- ❖ Identification of the key factors that drive the switching behavior ;
- ❖ Identification of relative importance of each of those key factors (convenience and other than convenience, i.e., Price (P), Indifference (I) & nothing specific (N) clubbed together as 'Other than Convenience') influencing the consumers into switching the service provider ;
- ❖ Identification of how the switching behavior varies between the genders.

Key objectives of the research, which have been drawn from literature survey, have been summarized in the following decision table, which are manifested in the hypotheses framed for the study. The elements of the table have been validated through empirical analysis (Table 2).

Table 2 : Decision Table		
Assumptions	Male	Female
1. Switching Behavior	True	True
2a. Reason for Switching	Convenience	Convenience
2b. Reason for Switching	Convenience	Other than Convenience (P,I,N)
2c. Reason for Switching	Other than Convenience	Convenience
2d. Reason for Switching	Other than Convenience	Other than Convenience

SCOPE & EXTENSION

The current scopes of study and possible extensions have been described in the Table 3:

Table 3 : Scope And Extensions Of The Current Study	
Current	Extension
The study was conducted with a sample size of 50 members.	The study can be extended by taking more sample members.
The study was conducted in Kolkata.	The study can be conducted in other geographies.
The study was conducted considering members from heterogeneous income groups.	The study can be conducted considering members from homogeneous income groups.
The age group considered for the study was between 21-28 years.	The study can be tested for age groups beyond 28 years.
The participants were taken mainly from B-Schools.	Participants can be taken from Non-B Schools, office staff, executives, call center staff, teachers in the mixed group mode or single group mode.
The study has covered multiple mobile service providers.	The study can be extended for a single service provider.
As per the findings from literature survey, there are studies conducted only in the male segments and rarely in the female or female-male joint segment. The study has been conducted for both the genders.	Even though there are studies conducted only in the male segments and rarely in the female or female-male joint segment, scope exists to conduct the study for a single gender to test the relative significance of convenience and non-convenience factors that presumably have not been taken into account.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study has been conducted using convenience sampling. Random sampling would have been ideal for ensuring greater homogeneity of the sample members under study.
- ❖ Findings of the study have been limited to the test of significance and correlation coefficient. Determination of Eigenvalues would have added greater depth to the study.
- ❖ Since convenience has emerged as the prime cause for switching, technology specific details pertaining to

convenience, for example, technology offerings and which of the offerings are of prime importance to the users, require deep-dive exploration and this aspect can be considered for future research.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Diverse findings on the subject matter are supported by research hypotheses, although they may not be exactly relevant to the scope of the study. General findings on gender-specific loyalty on consumer products have also been discussed in the literature survey. However, considering the vast information assimilated through literature survey and the gamut of the problem, the following hypotheses have been framed for validation.

❖ **Null Hypothesis (H_0): There are no gender specific differences regarding influence of factors that cause the switching.**

Although this has been explored through a sample survey, there is supportive evidence embracing studies showing no general difference between males and females in the extent of their consumer loyalty. This finding is inconsistent with the theory of Cross and Madson (1997). Instead, studies suggest that male consumer loyalty, more than female consumer loyalty, is geared toward groups whereas female consumer loyalty, more than male consumer loyalty, is geared toward individuals. This result is consistent with the theory of Baumeister and Sommer (1997).

❖ **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There are gender specific differences regarding influence of factors that cause the switching.**

Gender differences in customer loyalty depend on fundamental psychological differences between men and women. Women tend to view themselves as being connected with and dependent on a few specific individual others. In contrast, men tend to view themselves as being connected with and dependent on larger groups of people and organizations. Because individual relationships are more important to women, they are more likely to develop loyal customer relationships with individual service providers. Conversely, men find group relationships important, and are more likely to develop loyal customer relationships with firms and organizations. Female customers should be more likely than male customers to defect and follow an individual employee, if that employee leaves the company. The results indicate that companies may want to use different strategies to prevent customer defection depending on the gender of their customers (Valentyna, Stijn, Osselaer & Bijmolt, 2009). Studies have been conducted on mediation and moderation of customer characteristics, and the past churn experience using Baron and Kenny (1986) procedure. The outcome was that the gender is completely moderated through the phone purchase involvement. Further studies found other moderations or mediations. Besides, other studies have supported results as women's intention to switch being of less influence as men's, though in both cases, the phone purchase involvement was an important factor in changing the mobile service provider.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research design has been an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of responses in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with an economy in the procedure (Selltitz et al., 1962). Survey research is also called field research and is a procedure for gathering information about a large number of people by collecting information from a few of them (Black & Champion, 1976). For this study, survey research was conducted by interviewing a group of students comprising of both the genders. Independent variables in the research are the

Independent Variable					Dependent Variables		
Residential location	Gender	Age	Current Service Provider	Previous Service Provider	Reasons for change	Loyalty scoring	Advocacy scoring
					Convenience	Other than Convenience	

stimuli which are the factors responsible for switching behavior of the users; those are namely, Convenience and other than Convenience factors (price, indifference, nothing specific, etc.). Dependent variables are the responses from the male and female participants pertaining to their views on the cause of switching. Detailed discussions on these variables are as follows:

❖ **Dependent Variable And Independent Variable** : An independent variable is the presumed cause, whereas, the dependent variable is the presumed effect. This is represented in the study as the variable 'gender' consisting of two text values: 'male' and 'female' or the variable gender has two attributes: male and female. Whereas, the dependent variable is what is affected by the independent variable - the effects or outcomes of the study. Switching or non-switching behavior is the outcome expressed by the independent variables under some specific business-related stimulus or dependent variables, manifested in Users' Convenience, Price, and Indifference of the Service Provider or it could be Nothing Specific. In this study, an attempt has been made to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, such that, for future research, if the independent variable is changed, then it will be possible for the researcher to accurately predict how the dependent variable will change. This has been discussed in the scope of the research. The dependent and independent variables considered in this research are illustrated in the form of the Table 4.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Convenience Sampling procedure has been used in this study. In convenience sampling, the researcher studies all those persons who are most conveniently available. As its name implies, convenience sampling involves collecting information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide this information (Sekaran, 1992). In this case, the sample members were a group of students in a B- School in Kolkata comprising of both the genders. This method has been quick and economical and suitable for exploratory research as well as best utilized for exploratory research when additional research will subsequently be conducted with a probability sample (Ahuja, 2010). Besides, convenience sampling was one of the non-probability sampling designs that was used in this research. The sampling units were both male and female mobile phone operator customers of Kolkata. The data was summarized in the form of descriptive statistics. As hypotheses have been tested to identify the relationship of certain variables that are based on the scale of ordinal data in the questionnaire, Yule Correlation Coefficient had been used. 25 female and 25 male students of Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management, a leading B School located in Kolkata, participated in the study. Participants were asked to indicate to **a)** Who is their current service provider? **b)** How long have they been using the service? **c)** Who was their service provider earlier? **d)** Why did they switch the service provider and four reasons were mentioned: **i)** Convenience ; **ii)** Price ; **iii)** Indifference of the service provider ; **iv)** Nothing specific. Apart from these queries, name, gender and age of the members were also recorded.

STUDY FINDINGS

❖ **The Findings With Respect Of The Objectives Of The Research Are As Follows:** Sample survey data has been used to arrive at the findings of the ANOVA study and Yule's correlation coefficient. Table 5 furnishes the difference between the group and within the group followed by the f value.

Table 5 : ANOVA Findings				
Source	SS	df	MS	f
Between the groups	96.5	1	98.5	1.7
Within the groups	171.5	3	57.2	
Total	268	4		
Critical value $f_{.05} = 5.99$				

Assumptions	Male	Female
1. Switching Behavior	True	True
2. Reason for Switching	Convenience	Convenience

Observed value $f = 0.5$ is less than the critical value, and hence, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference between the switching behavior of males and females in the extent of their consumer loyalty. Both genders have shown strong signs of switching led by convenience. Surprisingly, price is not a major factor for switching for both the genders; it is all the more because price has come down so much that it has become affordable for anyone. It is convenience that primarily drives the switching desire of the consumers. Service providers' indifference has definitely some bearing on switching, but empirically, it is insignificant and is not one of the major factors as some of the users have felt about it. Convenience being the factor of prime importance, the mobile service providers can concentrate more upon improvement of mobile service deployment in their large customer base. It can be in terms of better technology, ease of getting connection and operations, getting connected with extreme ease. In view of the findings, Null Hypothesis (H_0) cannot be rejected, which states there are gender-specific differences in the switching behavior, discarding the Alternative Hypothesis, which states that there are gender-specific differences in the switching behavior of the mobile users.

From the ANOVA table (Table 5), the co-efficient of determination, $r^2 = 96.5/288$.

Correlation co-efficient, $r = \sqrt{(96.5/288)} = 0.5788$.

The range of r^2 is from 0 to 1 and that of r is from -1 to +1, showing positive correlation. Also, determination of Yule Correlation Coefficient shows there is a positive association between the genders and factors of switching, giving phi value of 0.23.

From the findings in the Table 5, the decision table constructed with the assumptions (Table 2) has been finalized in the Table 6.

From the findings, it is apparent that the mobile service providers need to be more concerned about the areas of "Convenience Specific Factors". Any indifference in these areas may result in Poor Customer Service, Unknowledgeable Employees, Long Wait Times for Consumer Service, Error in Billing, Poor Network Coverage, Frequent Network Problems, No New Schemes, Unsuitable Plans For Different Age Groups, Unavailability of Recharge Facilities, Better Features Offered By Competitors, etc.

Most of the reputed mobile service providers rigorously review quality of service rendered to their customers. There is also a research finding showing that service quality has higher importance than price for customer satisfaction (Dahari et al., 2011). Customer value creation being the significant component of relationship marketing, as it is seen as a key source of competitive advantage, various strategies are in place to accomplish sustained and profitable relationships, and this is a routine and regular exercise that the service providers have to conduct for survival (Biswas, 2010). This was further substantiated in a survey of consumers which showed that price is just one of the factors consumers take into account while buying products: they also considered the degree of trust they have in the retailers, their product assortment, and their previous buying experience (Helbling, Liebowitz & Rettaliata, 2011). It is time for the mobile service providers to innovate better ways, innovative strategies, including the Blue Ocean Strategy (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), to serve their consumers so that the switching is minimum, and they are able to attract a large number of new clients every day. Since both the genders exhibit similar behavior in switching, the service providers can take up gender in combination with age group specific promotional schemes, giving equal weightage to each of them as a token of loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The above findings fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is not enough evidence to state that the alternative is true at the pre-determined confidence level. Switching trend is quite significant in various customer segments due to low switching costs and highly competitive tariff plans. With entry barriers easing and mobile number portability, there is a high probability for switching in every segment of consumers. As there is a pronounced emphasis

on switching for convenience, the mobile service providers, from time to time, need to review factors pertaining to network coverage and service, as these have a critical role in retaining customers in this dynamic environment, where a number of players are ready with lucrative offers for their customers. Price difference has not found relative importance with respect to convenience, and this is true irrespective of genders. Hence, the mobile operators should employ a number of strategies to manage the challenges. It is important that customer interactions at various stages are necessary to ensure customer intimacy and loyalty. Providing information on different plans, value-added services, provision and activation of additional services, and customer-friendly environment at all points of interaction are necessary to ensure customer delight. Network coverage and access are the key factors that influence the customer retention. Hence, investment in network and technology should go on to improve the geographic coverage, seamless connectivity and speed. Improvement in the quality of basic services – the voice calls will prove to be an excellent strategy for enhancing customer loyalty and future roadmap of technology would take into account such features to prevent loyal customers from switching.

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