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Being Fair to Customers: A Strategy in Enhancing Customer Engagement and Loyalty in the Bangladeshi Mobile Telecommunication Industry


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Abstract

The mobile telecommunications sector in Bangladesh is extremely competitive, necessitating a sophisticated comprehension of the complex interplay among fairness, trust, engagement, and loyalty. This study examines the trends in this industry using a quantitative methodology and 150 participants. The study focuses on how consumer behaviour, loyalty, and the chance of switching service providers are affected by perceived fairness. It also explores representations of demographics, length of customer relationships, and differing opinions on cost, remuneration, and dispute resolution processes. The results underscore the tactical benefit of equitable treatment in shaping consumer behaviour, allegiance, and contentment. The study underscores the significance of suppliers customising their approaches to appeal to a wide range of demographic groups, addressing issues regarding equity, and enlisting happy customers as brand ambassadors. It also highlights the industry's ongoing requirement for evaluation and flexible loyalty-building tactics in a market that is changing quickly. In the face of fierce competition, the study offers mobile service providers in Bangladesh useful information on how to cultivate long-lasting relationships with their customers. It is understood that there are restrictions on extrapolating results to other industries, that the sample procedure may induce biases, and that qualitative insights are necessary. Prospective investigations into certain fairness features, cross-industry comparisons, qualitative approaches, and longitudinal studies are some ideas for future research. When taken as a whole, these channels have the ability to further our comprehension of the dynamics of justice, trust, engagement, and loyalty while cultivating customised approaches for long-term client relationships in the mobile telecom industry.

Keywords: Mobile Telecommunications Industry, Customer Engagement, Customer Loyalty, Service Fairness, Trust, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Within the dynamic and swiftly progressing mobile telecommunications sector of Bangladesh, service providers contend fiercely for client engagement and loyalty. Success currently requires the strategic cultivation and maintenance of these vital components (Rahman). The level of trust, perception of service impartiality, and overall quality of the mobile telephony experience are critical factors in addressing this issue. The present study investigates the intricate interplay among consumer engagement, loyalty, trust, and service equity within this industry.

It is not only an ethical necessity that services be fair; it is also a strategic advantage. Research has shown that providing equitable treatment or service to customers significantly influences their loyalty and level of satisfaction (Giovanis et al.). When clients believe that their service provider is treating them equitably, they are more loyal, satisfied, and trusting (Islam et al.). In addition to influencing their purchasing decisions, service impartiality significantly improves the overall performance of mobile telecommunications companies.

An additional indication of the significance of service fairness is the manifold benefits a business can obtain from devoted customers, including reduced expenses and increased customer accountability. Retaining clients can be financially advantageous (Nasir), according to research, because they frequently spend significantly more than acquiring new ones.

Despite the critical relationship between customer loyalty and service parity having been established in prior research, the literature remains scarce, particularly in regards to the mobile telecommunications sector in Bangladesh. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by providing a comprehensive comprehension of the relationships between service fairness, customer loyalty, trust, and customer engagement in this specific context.

How fair treatment contributes to customer loyalty and how it ties into the broader concept of service quality is the primary focus of this study. In order to address this inquiry, we construct a conceptual framework that elucidates the interrelationships among service equity, client loyalty, trust, and engagement.

Due to the rapid expansion of the mobile telecommunications sector and the intense competition among service providers, this research holds particular relevance for Bangladesh. The critical nature of customer loyalty maintenance in this fiercely competitive market demonstrates the significance of fostering customer loyalty (Datta et al.).

In the sections that follow, the literature on consumer loyalty, service fairness, and trust will be examined in depth. We shall also delineate the methodology employed to examine these facets within the mobile telecommunications industry

in Bangladesh. The research outcomes will be comprehensively examined, and the subsequent sections will elucidate the factors that influence consumer loyalty and engagement in this particular market.

Literature Review

Because of the fierce rivalry in the Bangladeshi mobile telecommunications sector, client loyalty and service quality are crucial (Uddin et al.). In order to effectively create strategies for improving customer engagement and loyalty, mobile telecommunications firms in Bangladesh must have a thorough understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding consumer loyalty, the importance of trust, and the role that justice plays in providing services.

Customer Loyalty and Service Quality

The concept of customer loyalty is complex and involves a customer's allegiance to a specific brand or service provider (Srivastava and Kaul). It is often known that a company's profitability and long-term success can be greatly impacted by its base of devoted customers (Alamgir et al.; Mishra et al.; Khanam and Sakib; Sakib et al. "Entrepreneurial Competencies and SMEs' Performance in a Developing Economy"). Like any other industry, the mobile telecommunications sector benefits greatly from maintaining a devoted customer base (Nekmahmud and Rahman). Loyal consumers are more likely to spend more, have lower attrition rates, and promote the company.

Scholars are still debating how to measure client loyalty, though. Some suggest a behavioral approach, which defines brand loyalty as the practice of consistently buying the same company's goods (Guo et al.). Some advocates of an attitude-based strategy highlight the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of consumers when they make haphazard purchases (Ashraf et al.). These divergent opinions highlight how difficult it is to gauge client loyalty.

Service fairness has been a hot topic in the field of service marketing. It is the way that clients view their equity and rights in the process of exchanging value with service providers. Fair treatment in service delivery involves more than simply the results (Dhasan et al.); it also includes the connections that are built between service providers and their clients.

Three elements are commonly used to characterize service fairness: distributive justice, which refers to fairness in outcomes; procedural justice, which concerns fairness in the stages and procedures leading to outcomes; and interactional justice (Usmani and Jamal), which concerns fairness in communication and interaction with service providers.

Service Fairness and Customer Loyalty

The relationship between service fairness and customer loyalty has been the subject of numerous studies, with varying degrees of success. According to certain studies, service fairness significantly increases both customer loyalty and the likelihood that they will return (Hassan et al.). For example, it has been discovered that distributive justice and interactional justice have a favorable effect on consumer loyalty in the hotel and restaurant businesses. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that distributive justice influences user loyalty on e-commerce platforms.

Not all research, nevertheless, has discovered a strong correlation between service fairness and client loyalty. These contradictory results imply that depending on particular industry situations and consumer preferences, the effect of service fairness on customer loyalty may differ.

The Importance of Customer Trust

Customer trust is essential in today's business environment. It is a vital component of customer loyalty and eventually leads to more interactions between the company and its clients. Gaining client trust advances the many goals of a business by assisting in customer retention, increasing revenue, and enhancing the value and reputation of a brand (Alam et al.; Sakib et al. "Entrepreneurial Competencies and SMEs' Performance in a Developing Economy"; Sahabuddin et al.; Jabber et al.). In this context, a customer's attitude toward an organization—whether favorable or unfavorable—can be characterized as trust. Justice and trust are intimately related in service organizations. When clients receive equitable treatment, they are more likely to trust the company (Roy et al.; Sakib "Shohoz"). Research has indicated that treating customers fairly and legally increases their trust and decreases their likelihood of being

disloyal (Sultana; Sakib et al. "What we know about the Trends, Prospects, and Challenges of Human Resource Outsourcing"). A successful and long-lasting business, therefore, is built on the foundation of client trust, which is bolstered by factors like high-quality products, first-rate customer service, and after-sales support.

Hierarchical Customer Engagement as the Determinant of Customer Loyalty

The notion of client involvement has acquired significant traction as a crucial element in cultivating consumer loyalty. According to the theory of hierarchical consumer engagement, stronger and more enduring loyalty results from higher and more frequent customer interaction (Rather). Customer engagement is known to precede customer perception of value. The multiple dimensions of customer engagement are identification, attention, enthusiasm, absorption, and interaction. Previous studies have indicated that through strengthening cognitive complacency with a brand and solidifying a client's loyalty to a service provider, customer engagement increases consumer loyalty (Yaqub et al.; Sakib "The Ride-Sharing Services in Bangladesh"; Sakib "Role of Big Data in Achieving Competitive Advantage"; Sakib "Shohoz"; Sakib et al. "What we know about the Trends, Prospects, and Challenges of Human Resource Outsourcing"). Additionally, satisfied consumers are more likely to refer friends to the brand and use the service again.

Our inquiry of the connections between service fairness, trust, customer engagement, and loyalty in the context of Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications market is based on the literature review. The research methodology and data analysis relevant to Bangladesh will be presented in the next sections of this paper, providing insights into the elements driving consumer engagement and loyalty in this distinct industry context.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

The primary objective of this quantitative study is to examine the variables that influence consumer engagement and loyalty in the mobile telecommunications sector in Bangladesh. 150 individuals who were actively engaged in this

industry and were chosen using a convenience sampling technique provided data for the study. In order to meet the eligibility requirements, participants had to have had a mobile phone subscription for at least six months, demonstrating that they had enough experience using mobile telecommunications services.

Data Collection Instruments

The utilization of a structured questionnaire that addressed several aspects of the study goals was one of the primary methods for data collection. Respondents indicated how much they agreed with various assertions using a 7-point Likert scale in many sections of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The two primary techniques for analyzing the data were variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) and partial least squares (PLS) analysis. PLS was chosen because of its ability to handle irregularly distributed data and manage multicollinearity. The study assessed the validity and reliability of the measurement model using tests for unidimensionality, discriminant validity, and convergent validity.

For assessing the structural model, Goodness of Fit (GoF) analysis, R², and Q² were significant statistics. GoF provides information on the model's robustness, Q² assesses predictive performance, and R² calculates the proportion of variation the model can explain. T-values were used to assess the statistical significance of path coefficients and test the study hypotheses.

Findings & Analysis

The survey was completed by 150 people working in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications industry. A total of 63 (42%) and 87 (58%) of the respondents were men. The gender distribution of the study indicates that women are quite well-represented in the industry, with a somewhat higher participation rate among them. To gain a complete awareness of the factors impacting customer engagement and loyalty in the industry, it is imperative to grasp the perspectives of both genders involved.

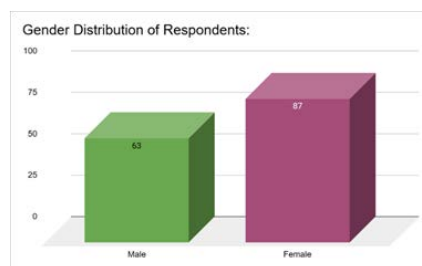


Figure 1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

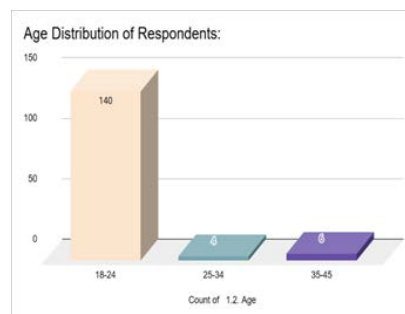


Figure 2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Three age groups were created based on the survey respondents: 18–24, 25–34, and 35–45. There were 150 responses in all, most of which were in the 18–24 age group, suggesting that this study had a significant younger demographic. Four respondents, or a lesser percentage, were in the 25–34 age range, and six respondents, or people in the 35–45 age range. This age distribution shows that the study mainly focuses on the opinions of people between the ages of 18 and 24, which is important to know how younger consumers in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector see customer engagement and loyalty.

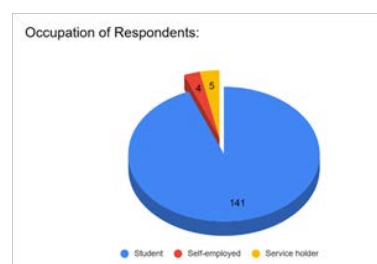


Figure 3 Occupation of Respondents

Three categories were created based on the vocations of the respondents: service holders, self-employed individuals, and students. Students made up 94% of the total respondents, the bulk of whom were students. Merely 2.67% of the participants in the survey self-identified as self-employed. In the meantime, 3.33% of those surveyed were employed. The study's student population is represented in this distribution, which emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend this important demographic group's viewpoints while looking for ways to improve customer engagement and loyalty in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector.

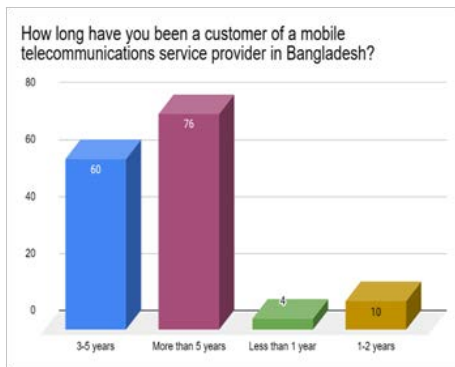


Figure 4 Duration of Customer Relationship with Mobile Telecommunications Service Provider

The respondents' tenure as customers of mobile telecommunications service providers in Bangladesh varied. The majority of respondents (about 50.67%) have been using their selected providers for more than five years, indicating a sustained relationship. A considerable percentage (about 40%) have been in business with the same client for three to five years. A lesser portion (about 6.67%) had been clients for one to two years, and a negligible portion (around 2.67%) had just recently begun working with clients for a duration of less than a year. Within the research sample, this distribution shows a mix of very recent and long-standing client interactions, reflecting the varied experiences and viewpoints of consumers in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector.

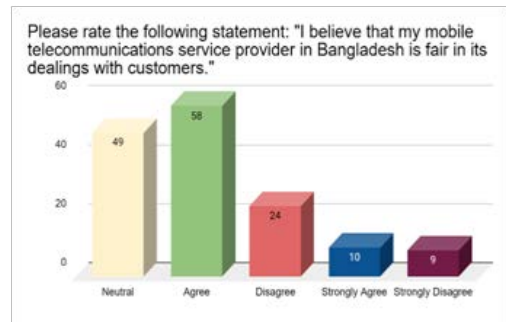


Figure 5 Perceived Fairness of the Mobile Telecommunications Service Provider

Regarding the perceived fairness of the mobile telecommunications service provider, the data shows a variety of responses. A sizable portion of respondents (about 32.67%) took a neutral position, meaning they don't strongly agree or disagree with the statement. 16% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their service provider is fair, whilst 38.67% of respondents agreed with it. Only about 6.67% of respondents strongly felt that their service provider was fair, while 6% strongly disagreed.

These findings demonstrate the range of viewpoints held by consumers, indicating that ideas on fairness may differ depending on personal experiences and expectations. In order to resolve any problems and improve their standing as fair providers of mobile services, mobile telecommunications firms ought to be attentive to the worries and opinions of their users.

Have you actively recommended your mobile telecommunications service provider to others (e.g., friends or family)?

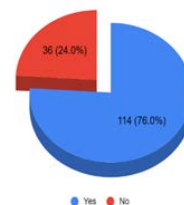


Figure 6 Actively Recommending Mobile Telecommunications Service Providers

A significant proportion of participants (about 76%) enthusiastically suggested their mobile phone service providers to acquaintances or relatives.

This suggests that they had a great experience and a high degree of satisfaction with their providers, which encouraged them to recommend the services. But a sizable minority (about 24%) did not actively promote anything, which could be for a number of reasons, such as individual preferences or having had different experiences with their providers. According to the findings, a sizable fraction of consumers in Bangladesh's mobile telecom sector advocate for the service providers they have selected, which may increase consumer engagement and loyalty.

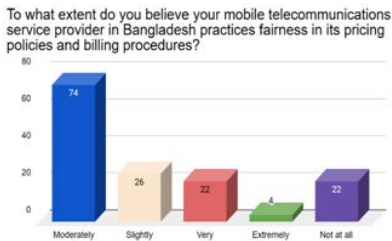


Figure 7 Perceived Fairness in Pricing Policies and Billing Procedures

About 49.3% of respondents said they had a moderate level of confidence in the fairness of the pricing and invoicing practices used by their mobile phone service provider. Furthermore, 17.2% of respondents thought their providers implemented fairness to a very high degree, compared to 11.6% who thought it was to an extreme degree. Nonetheless, a noteworthy 19.8% of participants expressed somewhat to completely unfavorable opinions, indicating that there might be space for enhancement in guaranteeing that pricing strategies and invoicing protocols are regarded as equitable by all clientele. These findings demonstrate the wide diversity of user perspectives on pricing equity in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector.

Do you think your mobile telecommunications service provider offers fair compensation or resolution when you encounter issues or problems with their services?



Figure 8 Perceived Fair Compensation or Resolution for Service Issues

The replies show that the respondents have a wide variety of viewpoints. A similar proportion, or roughly 36%, held a negative opinion, saying they did not think their mobile telecommunications service provider offered fair compensation or resolution when problems arose. However, 36% of them felt that their provider did provide fair compensation or resolution. Furthermore, roughly 28% of responders expressed uncertainty, pointing to a lack of knowledge or clarity on this issue. These findings demonstrate that, in order to increase customer satisfaction, mobile telecom service providers in Bangladesh must concentrate on raising the perceived fairness of their compensation and issue resolution procedures.

How likely are you to switch to a different mobile telecommunications service provider in the near future?

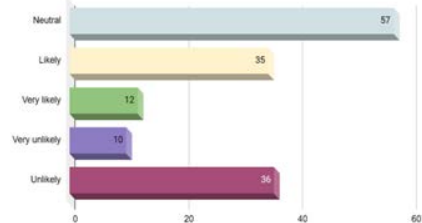


Figure 9 Likelihood of Switching Service Providers

When it comes to the respondents' propensity to move to a new mobile telecoms service provider, the data shows a mixed picture. 35 respondents said they would switch providers in the near future, while the majority (57) took a neutral position. However, 46 of those surveyed said they were not likely or extremely unlikely to switch. These results emphasize how crucial it is for Bangladeshi mobile telecom providers to regularly assess the quality of their services, customer satisfaction levels, and loyalty-building tactics in order to hold onto clients in a market that is becoming more and more competitive.

Conclusion and Recommendation Summary of Findings (Discussion)

In the fiercely competitive landscape of Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications industry, this research investigates the pivotal role of fairness in shaping customer engagement and loyalty. The

study, grounded in a thorough literature review and employing a quantitative approach with 150 industry participants, uncovers nuanced relationships among service equity, trust, engagement, and loyalty. Key findings highlight the centrality of perceived fairness in influencing customer recommendations, loyalty, and the likelihood of switching service providers. The gender distribution of respondents underscores a balanced representation, emphasizing the importance of considering diverse perspectives in understanding factors impacting customer engagement and loyalty.

While the majority of respondents fall within the 18–24 age group, crucial for insights into younger consumers, the dominant student population suggests a need to comprehend this demographic's viewpoints. The varied duration of customer relationships, ranging from less than a year to over five years, reflects diverse consumer experiences in Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector. Perceptions of fairness in pricing and billing practices reveal a spectrum of opinions, necessitating providers to address concerns and enhance transparency. Similarly, opinions on compensation and issue resolution procedures vary, underscoring the need for providers to improve perceived fairness to boost overall customer satisfaction. Notably, a substantial proportion of participants actively recommends their mobile service providers, indicating a positive correlation between satisfaction and advocacy. However, a segment refrains from active promotion, signaling areas for providers to address in enhancing customer engagement and loyalty.

The study also reveals a mixed sentiment regarding the likelihood of switching service providers, emphasizing the industry's need for continuous assessment of service quality and loyalty-building strategies. In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of fairness, trust, engagement, and loyalty within Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications sector, offering a foundation for strategic enhancements and sustained customer relationships in this highly competitive market.

Practical Implication

The findings of this research hold significant practical implications for mobile telecommunications

providers in Bangladesh seeking to enhance customer engagement and loyalty. Firstly, the study underscores the strategic advantage of fair treatment, not only as an ethical imperative but as a means to influence customer loyalty and satisfaction. Providers are urged to prioritize equitable service delivery, recognizing its profound impact on customer perceptions and behavior. Understanding the diverse demographic landscape is crucial. While the study's majority falls within the 18–24 age group, dominated by students, providers should tailor strategies to resonate with this demographic's unique perspectives. Simultaneously, recognizing the balanced gender representation emphasizes the need for inclusive approaches that consider varied viewpoints in loyalty-building initiatives. The duration of customer relationships, ranging from short to long-term, necessitates personalized engagement strategies. Providers should acknowledge and address the varied experiences of consumers, ensuring tailored services that resonate with both new and longstanding customers. Perceived fairness in pricing, billing, and issue resolution emerges as pivotal. Providers should prioritize transparency in these areas to address concerns voiced by a substantial segment of participants. Improving perceived fairness can significantly contribute to overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The study's revelation that a significant proportion actively recommends their mobile service providers signals an opportunity for providers to leverage satisfied customers as advocates. Implementing strategies to encourage and amplify positive word-of-mouth can further boost customer engagement and loyalty. Finally, the mixed sentiment regarding the likelihood of switching service providers underscores the dynamic nature of consumer preferences. Continuous assessment of service quality, coupled with proactive loyalty-building strategies, becomes imperative for providers navigating the fiercely competitive landscape. In conclusion, this research equips mobile telecommunications providers in Bangladesh with actionable insights to foster enduring customer relationships and navigate the intricate terrain of customer engagement and loyalty.

Conclusion

In navigating the intense competition of Bangladesh's mobile telecommunications industry, this research underscores the strategic significance of fairness in fostering customer engagement and loyalty. Grounded in a comprehensive literature review and quantitative analysis involving 150 participants, the study reveals nuanced relationships among service equity, trust, engagement, and loyalty. The findings emphasize the pivotal role of perceived fairness in influencing customer behavior, loyalty, and provider-switching likelihood. The balanced gender representation in respondents and the predominant student population highlight the importance of diverse perspectives. As the industry evolves, understanding the varied duration of customer relationships becomes crucial. Perceptions of fairness in pricing and compensation procedures signal areas for provider improvement, while the correlation between advocacy and satisfaction unveils opportunities for strategic enhancements. The mixed sentiment on provider-switching underscores the industry's need for continuous evaluation and adaptive loyalty-building strategies, providing a foundation for sustained customer relationships amid fierce competition.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations

- The study's focus on the mobile telecommunications sector in Bangladesh may limit the generalizability of findings to other industries.
- The convenience sampling method employed might introduce bias, impacting the broader applicability of results.
- The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias, affecting the accuracy of participant perceptions.
- The predominantly student respondent demographic may skew findings toward a specific age group and occupation, limiting the study's broader demographic representation.
- The research primarily adopts a quantitative approach, potentially overlooking qualitative insights and holistic perspectives.
- The cross-sectional design may not capture

the dynamic nature of customer relationships over time, requiring caution in drawing causal conclusions.

- The study addresses perceived fairness but doesn't delve deeply into specific fairness dimensions, leaving room for more nuanced investigations.

Future Directions

Moving forward, researchers have the opportunity to significantly enrich the field by pursuing several key directions. First, exploring cross-industry dynamics would involve investigating fairness, trust, and loyalty dynamics across diverse industries, aiming to identify both commonalities and distinctions. Second, incorporating qualitative insights through methodologies that delve into in-depth consumer perspectives and experiences related to fairness and loyalty can provide a richer understanding of these complex phenomena.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to track changes in customer perceptions over time, capturing the evolving nature of loyalty in the dynamic landscape of the mobile telecommunications industry. Comparative analyses across different countries can further assess cultural influences on perceptions of fairness and loyalty, contributing to a global perspective. Intervention studies within the mobile telecommunications sector would allow researchers to assess the impact of fairness-focused strategies on customer engagement and loyalty in a real-world context. Lastly, addressing specific fairness dimensions, such as distributive and procedural aspects, can provide a more granular understanding of their distinct impact on customer relationships. These diverse directions collectively have the potential to advance our comprehension of fairness, trust, engagement, and loyalty dynamics, paving the way for the development of targeted strategies that foster sustained and mutually beneficial customer relationships.

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