Measuring The Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality and Corporate Image: A Case Study of Airtel and BSNL

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Abstract

In the light of the changes taking place in the business world as a result of globalization, liberalization and increasing competition no company can afford to ignore the importance of favourable (corporate) image since it reflects the character of a company. The more favourable is the image, the more active people are in recommending a company's products to their friends and relatives. The main purpose of the above study is to measure the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and corporate image. A sample size of 1000 customers has been taken in the study comprising of 500 Airtel and BSNL users each. The analysis indicates that both the variables customer satisfaction and service quality have been found to be significant predictors of corporate image of the telecom companies.

Keywords: Service quality, customer satisfaction, corporate image, telecom sector, BSNL, Airtel etc.

Introduction

A strong corporate image is very important from the company's perspective as well as it not only helps the company to quickly launch new products and services but also to charge premium pricing on them due to long term association with Customers who are loyal to them. These customers who are positively influenced by the corporate image of the company have high degree of faith in the company's products and services. Hence when a new product or service is launched they are ready to experiment with it even after paying higher prices since they are confident that they will be getting a product or service which is worth the value invested in them. Not only that but these customers also influence other customers to go and try the products of the company thereby expanding the customer base. Additionally, companies with strong corporate image incur less manpower cost as compared to companies not having a positive corporate image. That is because they are able to attract good talent at cost effective salaries as prospective employees are interested in getting associated with them. Moreover, with low turnover of

employees the cost of recruitments also goes down.

We have many examples of such companies in India such as Tatas, Birla, and Escorts etc. with whom employees take pride in associating with and do not leave in short period. At the same time Honda, General Motors, IBM are companies which are from other countries but having strong corporate image in India as well. Other advantages from the company's perspective are that the capital lending institutions being confident of financial strength of these companies easily lend capital to them, the government agencies are supportive and enforcement agencies are cautious against taking any

harsh decision against them.

However irrespective of how much strong reputation an organization has in the minds of stake holders they need to tread a cautious path when the situation comes where they need to reengineer their corporate image. They need to ensure that the original image remains intact so that old loyal customer base is not disturbed while new elements are added to the image in line with the new product/service offerings and the target customer segment. In addition to this sometimes revitalizing of the company's corporate image becomes necessary in case of negative market image created due to some reason.

This has to be very carefully done keeping in mind the customers' expectations based on a detailed survey of the market as to their needs. Further while company takes lot of pains to build up a corporate image it might happen that they need to change the existing image completely in view of disappearing target customers or a major change in the trends of Industry/customers. At this point the roles leader play becomes very crucial in terms of making the changes happen subtly and professionally first internally and then to the stake holders in the outside world through beautifully crafted ad campaigns and press releases.

The various stake holders for an organization are not just its customers but also its employees, investors, suppliers, financial institutions etc. Also to be kept in mind is another concept which has become strong with the advancement of technology that an individual may take multiple roles at the same time. For example, a customer may be an investor as well. Hence business leaders have to exhibit their best strategic skills to identify those attributes in their product/services and organization which are unique, authentic and cannot be copied by others.

This is followed by selecting innovative ways to project this image to all the stake holders both internal and external so that it is strongly embedded in their mind and hearts. Companies spend a fortune in propagating this image as they realize that in the competitive world of today it is not only important to market the product/service but equally important is to market the organization itself in order to get an edge over the competitors. If correctly done, organizations are able to reap huge advantages.

However, despite all this exerciser different stake holders may have different images in their minds about the company since the need what they expect to get fulfilled from the organization vary from one stake holder to other. However, the most important linkage remains between the organization and its employees. That is because an employee through his quality of interaction with external stake holders can either make or mar the organization's image and reputation.

Review of Literature

Badila, Alexandru (2015) investigated the corporate image of the Romanian company. Corporate image of the Cluj- Napoca Romanian National Opera, has been measured from the point of view of perception of the external audiences. The study is based on the primary data collected from the customers of the company. Researcher has used various variables to study the perception of customers such as; repertory ampleness, repertory novelty, repertory variety, artist quality on stage, quality of scenography, technical/ musical performance, quality of stage management, quality of venue, montage, quality of backstage, quality of audience, auxiliary personnel, range of auxiliary activities, elitism, tradition and accessibility.

It was found from the study that all the variables related to the quality of the services are significant indicators of the corporate image. All the variables used in the study are found to be significant for building thepositive corporate image in the minds of the audiences of the studied company. The researcher has shown in the study that the quality of the offering whether it is a tangible product or intangible i.e. services, affects the corporate image of the company. If the company is able to meet the expectations of the customers towards the quality of services successfully, then it will definitely enjoy positive corporate image in the market. The study also shows that the corporate image varies from customer to customer and also differs due to different segments and demographic characteristics of the customers.

Raza, Siddiqi and Nasim (2015) conducted a study identify the factors which influence the customer's

switching decision of the customers in telecommunication industry. The research was based on the primary data collected from the 500 university students of Pakistan. Researcher have used regression technique to measure the impact of various factors which influence the customer's decision for switching from one telecom service provider to other. The dependent variable in the study is Switching behavior and independent variables are corporate image, trust, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and service quality.

It was found from the study that switching behavior of the telecom customers largely influenced by the corporate image of the telecom company. Customers' retention period will be longer, if the corporate image of the telecom company is positive, customers show more trust in the service provider, customer enjoy good service quality and highly satisfied by the products and services of the telecom companies. The value added services of the telecom company, helps in meeting the requirement of the customers and increase the level of customer satisfaction which will ultimately help in building and sustaining positive corporate image in the minds of the customers. In order to increase the customer satisfaction, telecom companies provide various value added services to their customers such as; free calls, audibility, strong network, access cost, mobile to mobile phone rates, and connection fees. Therefore, corporate image, trust, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and service quality, all plays an important role in making long term relationship with the customers and for higher retention rate of customers.

Qadri and Khan (2014) have identified the factors which affect the customer retention in the telecom companies of Pakistan. The study was based on the primary data collected from the customers of the cellular companies situated in Lahore. Researchers have measured the impact of corporate image, customer satisfaction, price, trust and switching barriers over the customer retention in cellular industry of Pakistan. It was found from the study that the customer retention in cellular industry is highly influenced by the corporate image, switching barriers such as; switching cost, interpersonal relationships, price perception, customer satisfaction and trust factors. Attractiveness towards the lower

priced alternatives lead to customer retention negatively. Thus, price perception plays an important role in customer retention in cellular industry. It was also found from the study that customer satisfaction has not shown a significant relationship with the customer retention, but it was found to be significantly related to the customer retention when taken with other variables. Trust and corporate image both helps in retaining the customers and developing long term relationship with the customers. The tendency of switching the network provider will be high among the customers, if the customers have no trust or lower trust towards their current service provider. Company should provide the high value services to its credible customers. Trust can be developed among customers by the employees of the company, as they are the ones, who directly interacts with the customers. High switching cost also keeps the customers with the same service provider for long time period and the switching barriers also keeps the customer retention rate high. Corporate image is a necessary element for developing a positive association between the customers and company for long term. Positive corporate image itself shows the high level of customer retention.

Quoquab et al. (2013) conducted a study to investigate the relationships among perceived service quality, service loyalty, trust and corporate image. The study was conducted on telecommunication companies of Malaysia using primary data. Primary data was collected from the 215 students. Researchers have used partial least squares method for data analysis. It was found from the study that corporate image and perceived service quality helps in building trust among customers and that will eventually lead to service loyalty. It is also evident from the study that, service quality and service loyalty are related to each other. Higher level of perceived service quality results into higher level of service loyalty among customers. The study also highlights the impact of corporate image on service loyalty. Researchers have also found that corporate image positively influences the service loyalty. Corporate image and perceived service quality found to be significantly related to the trust. Positive corporate image and high service quality leads to higher level of trust. In addition to this, researchers have also measured the impact of perceived service quality on the corporate image and it was found that perceived service quality has a positive impact on the

corporate image. Researchers have further explained that the customers who are satisfied with the service quality, tend to hold positive corporate image toward the service firms.

Ad-El-Salam and Shawky (2013), the study aimed to measure the relationship between service quality and corporate image. The study was based on the primary data collected from the customers of Egypt. It was found from the study that service quality is an important indicator of corporate image, which affects the customer loyalty. The researcher also found a significant and positive relationship among the variables used in the study namely; corporate image, service quality, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Service quality helps in maintaining the corporate image of the company and which ultimately affects the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Eman, Shawky and Nahas (2013) conducted a study to measure the relationship between corporate image, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and service quality. The study was mainly focused on the International Company of Egypt, using primary data collected from the 650 customers of the company. Researchers have used correlation, multiple regression analysis and chi-square analysis methods for the purpose of data analysis. It was found from the study that corporate image is positively related to the service quality, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Corporate image has been defined by the researchers as the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the customers towards the company and these feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the customers plays an important role in selection of a particular corporate brand over another.

The research further revealed that corporate image is both the antecedent and consequences of the customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and overall service quality. Positive customer experiences towards the service quality leads to positive attitude and preferences for the brand. The trust of the customers developed when company meets the expectations of the customers, which will lead to higher level of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Corporate image gets affected by the way the customers evaluate the service quality offered. Therefore, the corporate image is directly affected by the overall excellence of company in

providing quality services to the customers and that will also decide the loyalty of the customers towards the company. It was also found from the study that both the service quality and customer satisfaction have influence over the customer loyalty. Therefore, the customer satisfaction affects the recommendation of the services or products to the other people by the customers. Satisfied and loyal customers always spread positive communication about the company and perceive positive image of the company.

Rahman (2012) conducted a study to identify the determinants of customer's perception in telecom sector. The study was based on primary data collected from the 450 customers of telecom industry of Dhaka city, Bangladesh. Researcher has used confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling to extract the factors which affect the perception of customers of Dhaka. The researcher has highlighted three main determinants of customer's perceptions namely; customer satisfaction, corporate image and service quality. It was found from the study that majority of the telecom customers give weightage to service quality.

Corporate image plays an important role while examining the customers' perceptions about the service quality. Corporate image is one of the important determinant of customer's perception in telecom sector. The study revealed the fact that the perception of customers while choosing a telecom service provider, varies with the quality of services provided by the telecom companies. The telecom customers give more importance to the corporate image and service delivery in comparison to customer satisfaction.

The customers of telecom sector of Bangladesh, make selection of telecom service provider on the basis of corporate image of the service provider while the selection decision does not get affected by the previous experiences of the customers. The selection decision of service provider is also affected by the delivery of services on time and at reasonable prices. Further, the researcher stated in the study that the telecom operators of the Bangladesh are investing huge amount to improve the network quality, and for extended network in the area, due to the fact that customer's choice for a particular service provider depends on the service quality of the telecom companies. The telecom

companies are also attracting the customers by reducing the prices and by creating a positive corporate image in the mind of the existing and potential customers.

Hossain et al. (2012) conducted a research to identify the factors which affect the switching behavior of customers in telecom sector. The study was based on primary data collected from the 100 university students of Bangladesh. Researchers have used multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. All the respondents were from equal socio-economic status. It was found from the study that switching behavior of the telecom customers is highly influenced by the various factors such as; corporate image, perceived satisfaction, trust, switching cost and length of relationship. Length of relationship and switching cost has been found positively related with the customer switching resistance. The higher switching cost will lead to higher level of customer switching resistance. The longer the relationship of customers with the telecom company, higher will be customer switching resistance. Researchers have not found significant relationship between the customer switching resistance and trust, corporate image and perceived satisfaction among telecom subscribers.

Danish et al. (2015) conducted a research to determine the factors which influence the customer retention in the telecom sector. The study was based on primary data collected from the 300 customers of telecom sector of Pakistan, with the help of self-developed questionnaire. Researchers have used the structural equation modelling for developing a structural relationship between the variables used in the study namely; trust, satisfaction, corporate image, commitment, loyalty, and switching behavior of customers. It was found from the study that trust, customer satisfaction and loyalty positively affects the customer retention in the telecom sector. The retention will get increase with an increase in trust of the customers, satisfaction level of the customers, and increase in the customer loyalty. The repurchase behavior of the customers get influenced by the level of satisfaction among customers towards the products and services of the company.

Customer satisfaction gets affected by the functional and emotional benefits which a customer receives from the company. Corporate image and customer retention have been found positively related to each other. The customer is attracted towards the company's products or services due to the corporate image and also the retention of the customers gets influenced by the corporate image. Positive image helps in retaining the customers for a long time period. Customer loyalty depends on the long term relationship with the customers, which can be easily made with the help of positive corporate image. Therefore, it can be said that corporate image not only affects the customer retention but also the customer loyalty. The trust factor between the customers and the company arises due to timely services and fulfilment of commitments. Trust and commitments both helps in creating a positive and sustained image of company in the market.

Agyei and kilika (2014) conducted a study to measure the relationship between customer loyalty and corporate image. The study was focused on the mobile telecommunication sector of the Kenya. The study was based on the primary data collected from the 320 students of Kenyatta University. Researchers have used the correlation and regression analysis to measure the association between the four aspects of corporate image and the customer loyalty. The customer loyalty has been taken as dependent variable while all the four aspects of the corporate image have been taken as independent variables namely; Service quality, Physical aspect, Brand Image, and CEO/Executive reputation. It was found from the study that there is a positive and significant relationship between corporate image and the customer loyalty. All the four aspects of the corporate image such as; Service quality, Physical aspect, Brand Image, and CEO/Executive reputation, have positive influence over the customer loyalty in telecommunication sector of Kenya. The research reveals that the customer loyalty is associated with the marketing mix of the company as well as the intermediate conditions created by the marketing mix of the company. Therefore the company can increase the customer loyalty by focusing on the creation of a positive and sustainable image in the market.

Kihara and Ngugi (2014) conducted a study to identify the factors which influences the customer loyalty in telecommunication sector of Kenya. The study was based on the primary data collected from the seventy

post-paid customers of the Safaricom Ltd, from Nairobi. It was found from the study that service delivery, corporate image, switching barriers are the main factor which influences the customer loyalty in telecom sector. Further, it was stated by researchers that by increasing the switching barriers and improving the corporate image, telecom companies can lead to higher level of customer loyalty. Similarly, the better service quality and value added services to the telecom customers can increase the customer loyalty. Service quality has a positive relationship with the customer loyalty and any deficiency in service quality may adversely affect the customer loyalty. The perception of the customers about the image of the company depends upon the service quality. Superior services always create a positive corporate image in the minds of the customers and which will lead to high level of customer loyalty. The corporate image depends on the various factors such as; treatment to customers, fair and satisfactory resolution of customer's problems, keeping promises etc. positive corporate image can be built by giving respect to the customers, by resolving the problems of the customers in fair manner and on time, and by providing the quality services on the promised time. The performance of the company also affects the corporate image. It was also revealed from the study that corporate image has a direct effect on the customer's buying behavior. The main purpose of corporate image is to develop a positive attitude among customers for the brands.

Ashraf et al. (2013) conducted a study to identify the determinants of customer satisfaction in telecom industry of Pakistan. The study was based on the primary data collected from the 211 telecom users of Pakistan through well-structured questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis along with multiple regression analysis have been used in the study. Researchers have derived various factors which leads to customer satisfaction in telecom sector such as; service quality, perceived value, corporate image and customer loyalty. It was found from the study that customer loyalty is affected by the customer satisfaction. Further, researchers stated in the study that switching network is the most common problem which is faced by the telecom companies. Customer satisfaction is becoming more challenging task for the telecom companies in the environment where the real product differentiation is

very low. The results show that customer satisfaction is positively related with the service quality and corporate image, while customer loyalty depends upon the customer satisfaction. There is strong and positive association between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction and service quality plays a mediating role in customer loyalty in telecom sector of Pakistan. Moreover, the research revealed that the switching behavior of customers in telecom sector is highly influenced by the perceived corporate image. Customer retention in telecom sector is possible only when companies focus more on the creation of positive image in the minds of the customers.

Objectives

1. To measure the relationship between corporate image and service quality of telecom companies.
2. To measure the relationship between corporate image and customer satisfaction of telecom companies.

Research Methodology

The study is based on the primary and secondary data collected from the various sources. Secondary data sources such as Ebsco, Proquest, Emerald, Shodhganga and Google scholars have been used for accessing the literature on corporate image, websites of BSNL and Bharti Airtel to study the profile of the companies and to know the campaigns of the companies for building corporate image, newspaper articles, various other reports of TRAI and government reports to study the current trends of telecom sector in India and at global level. Primary data has been collected from the customers of BSNL and Airtel using self-developed questionnaire. Five telecom circles which have been selected for the purpose of data collection using survey method include Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Punjab. Sample size of the study is 1000 thus from each of these five telecom circles, 200 respondents have been selected. Thus, the sample size for each telecom circle was 200 and therefore, the total number of respondents is 1000 in the study. Various statistical techniques have been used to analyze the primary data such as factor analysis, chi square test, ANOVA test, multiple regression analysis and descriptive analysis etc.

Corporate Image and Service Quality

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768a	.590	.590	.85606

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality

Interpretation:

The regression model summary given in table 1 shows that the R value was 0.768, it shows that there is a positive but low degree of correlation between Corporate image and Service Quality. The value of R square was found to be 0.590, which indicates that Service Quality perceived by telecom users explain only 59 percent of the variation in the corporate image of the telecom companies. While rest of the 41 percent of the variation is caused due to another factors.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	891.097	1	891.097	1215.945	.000b
	Residual	618.520	844	.733		
	Total	1509.617	845			

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Image
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality

Interpretation:

Table 2 indicates the results of one-way Anova, the f-value was found to be 1215.945, at 99 percent confidence level. Hence, it can be said that the dependent variable and independent variables are significantly related and the regression model emerged between dependent variable i.e. corporate image and the independent variables i.e. Service Quality, was found to be significant.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.692	.109		-6.334	.000
	Service Quality	.953	.027	.768	34.870	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Image

Interpretation:

Table 3 shows the value of regression coefficients extracted through linear regression analysis. It was found that regression coefficient of the independent variable i.e. Service Quality was found to be 0.768, which was positive. Hence, it can be said that the Service Quality has a positive relation with thecorporate image of the telecom companies. It was found from the p-value corresponding to the regression coefficient that Service Quality was found to be positively and significantly related to the corporate image. Hence, it can be said that the Service Quality was found to be a significant predictor of the corporate image of the telecom companies.

Corporate Image and Customer Satisfaction

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.629a	.396	.395	1.03962

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Satisfaction

Interpretation:

The regression model summary given in table 4 shows that the R value was 0.629, it shows that there is a positive but low degree of correlation between Corporate image and Customer Satisfaction. The value of R square was found to be 0.396, which indicates that Customer Satisfaction among telecom users explain only 39 percent of the variation in the corporate image of the telecom companies. While rest of the 61 percent of the variation has been caused due to another factors.

Table 5: ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	597.414	1	597.414	552.747	.000b
	Residual	912.203	844	1.081		
	Total	1509.617	845			

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Image
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Satisfaction

Interpretation:

Table 5 indicates the results of one-way Anova, the f-value was found to be 552.747, at 99 percent confidence level. Hence, it can be said that the dependent variable and independent variables are significantly related and the regression model emerged between dependent variable i.e.corporate image and the independent variables i.e. Customer Satisfaction, was found to be significant.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.411	.190		-7.424	.000
	Customer Satisfaction	1.284	.055	.629	23.511	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Image

Interpretation:

Table 6shows the value of regression coefficients extracted through linear regression analysis. It was found that regression coefficient of the independent variable i.e. Customer Satisfaction was found to be 0.441, which was positive. Hence, it can be said that the Customer Satisfaction has a positive relation with thecorporate image of the telecom companies. It was found from the p-value corresponding to the regression coefficient that Customer Satisfaction was found to be positively and significantly related to the corporate image. Hence, it can be said that the Customer Satisfaction, was found to be a significant predictor of the corporate image of the telecom companies.

Conclusion:

Thus, we can conclude from the above analysis that both the variables customer satisfaction and service quality are significant predictors of the corporate image of the telecom companies. Both the variables are positively correlated with corporate image of the company. Higher is the customer satisfaction, higher is the perceived corporate image of the respective company among its

customers and similarly better is the service quality higher the corporate image enjoyed by the respective telecom company. Thus, the customers remain attached to a particular company enjoying higher corporate image for a longer time. Therefore we can conclude that service quality helps in maintaining the corporate image of the company and which ultimately affects the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Limitations and Future Scope:

The above study has the following limitations:

1. The study is limited to two telecom companies only i.e. Airtel and BSNL.

2. The above study measures corporate image by using only two variables namely service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore it represents a narrow picture and does not include other variables influencing corporate image.

Practical Implications:

A favourable (corporate) image not only helps sell merchandise and retains its customers for long, it also help in doing lot of other things. It creates consumers' confidence in products/services of a company, assures of acceptance for a new product; gives a company an edge in attracting good talent; helps keep the people in a company feeling it's a good place to work; helps attract capital for a company at favourable terms; gives a company an edge with dependable sources of supply, helps a company secure efficient, profitable distribution; and helps a community understand a company; accept it as a good citizen.

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