

STUDY OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICE PROVIDERS IN HIMACHAL DISTT SOLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The American National standards Institute defines service marketing refers to a 'Consumer - satisfaction – engineering tool whereby various issues like buying and selling of services, knowledge, skill of provider and supplier, and the style of offering the services, the designing of product mix, the framing of pricing and promotional strategies and formulation of overall marketing strategies on the basis of informative and intuitive decision with the help of sound information system, are analysed and implemented.' The perception of value plays a very significant role in determining customer satisfaction especially in marketing of a service. The value concept appears quite frequently, but any clear definition cannot be found until we turn to the literature on pricing. Monroe (1991) defines customer-perceived value as the ratio between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice. Few studies have investigated the relationship that exists in the service industry between customer satisfaction, service quality and perceived customer value. Bolton and Drew (1991) found that service quality and satisfaction/dissatisfaction experiences were the most important determinant of value. They also noticed that value was positively related to customer loyalty.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Zeithaml (1988) pointed out that perceived value is very subjective and distinct and it is different from one customer to another. After consolidating four consumers' expressions of value, she defined perceived value as a customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on the perception of what is received and what is given. A customer might evaluate the value dimension of the same product differently at different occasions. To illustrate; a customer may regard price as the most important criteria at the time of making decision to purchase a product. Subsequently, when he/she is faced with any problem with regards to the product, he/she might consider that customer service is the most important factor that will affect his/her satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

In service marketing, the value concept appears quite frequently, but any clear definition cannot be found until we turn to the literature on pricing. Monroe (1991) defined customer -perceived value as the ratio between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice. The perceived sacrifice was not solely referred to the purchase price but also includes all other possible costs that the customer might face in the purchasing process. Consider an example in which a customer intends to obtain a telephone service. Besides having to pay for the first month rental plus a deposit, he

must also consider the cost of transportation, internal wiring, waiting time, repairs and maintenance, risk of failure and/or poor performance. The perceived benefits are a combination of physical attributes, service attributes and technical support available in relation to the particular use of the product, as well as the purchase price and other indicators of perceived quality.

Thus, perceived value is the results or benefits customers receive in relation to total costs (which include the price paid plus other costs associated with the purchase). In simple terms, value is the difference between perceived benefits and costs. However, what constitutes value appears to be highly personal, idiosyncratic, and may vary widely from one customer to another (Holbrook, 1994; Zeithaml, 1988). Research evidence suggests that customer who perceive that they received value for money are more satisfied than customer who do not perceive they received "value for money" (Zeithaml, 1988).

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However, Anderson, Fornell & Lehman (1996), while studying the relationship between customer satisfaction, market share and profitability, proposed that value will has a direct impact on how satisfied customers are with suppliers. Similarly, Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha & Bryant (1996) have used the construct perceived value as the perceived level of service quality relative to the price paid. They also suggested that perceived value is one of the customer satisfaction determinants and the antecedents of perceived value are perceived quality and customer satisfaction.

To provide competitive service value to customers, a company must have a thorough understanding on the customer's need and the activities that constitute the customer's value chain. The customer value chain represents the sequence of activities performed by the individual customer with various members in which the product or service is appropriate. For example, a telephone service may be considered as a basic input for the customer's value chain for local and long-distance communication device. Perhaps, some of the customer regards the telephone service as a facsimile medium or an alternative to Internet access. Therefore, if a company knows the actual customer needs, they will be able to deliver the correct value plus the benefits that would be comprehended with its initial product offering.

OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

The primary objective of the research was to ascertain the gaps in service quality provided by Himachal telecommunication service providers and their determinants. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the co- relationship between customer satisfaction, service quality and

perception on value for leased line service in Telecommunication industry of Himachal, study area Baddi, Distt Solan.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Two stages Area sampling (Multi stage sampling) was employed. In this stage Area was divided into four zones (Zone I to Zone 4). For the purpose study, data is collected through interview and questionnaire duly filled from customers.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

A structured questionnaires was administered to 50 respondents i.e. users of cellular mobile telecommunication phones at Baddi , Distt Solan of Himachal Pradesh.

SCORING

The questionnaire consists of 15 statements that pertain to perception; satisfaction level of customer towards the services provided by the telecommunication service provider .score is on a 7 point scale.

RESEARCH OUTPUT

The significant service quality gaps identified from current study which requires immediate and focused attention presented in Table I

TABLE I – SIGNIFICANT SERVICE QUALITY GAPS IDENTIFIED

Gap I	Knowledge Gap	Physical layout (counters, seating, Waiting area, etc
Gap II	Design Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standardised & simplified delivery process ▪ Intensify and depth of service – more options in every scheme ▪ Use of customer feedback to improve service standards
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Courtesy shown by staff ▪ Ethical practices (no

Gap III	Internal Communication gap	pressuring tactics) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effectiveness of employees skills and ability when problem arises (critical incident)
Gap IV	Delivery Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informing customers of the nature and schedule of service ▪ Permitting change of scheme (prepaid scheme and post paid)
Gap V	Perception Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality service at reasonable cost ▪ Airtime hours / charges
Gap VI	External Communication Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response to suggestions/ complaints/feedback ▪ Customer delight-giving customers more than what they expect

The cellular mobile telecommunication service providers need to concentrate on the attributes in order to raise the service quality level to be on par with global players.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant difference in the evaluation of overall service quality with respect to different

Service providers.

H1: There is significant difference in the evaluation of overall service quality with respect to different Service providers.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis of employee's attitude towards the customer's satisfaction

EMPLOYEES

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	somewhat agree	30	58.8	60.0	60.0
	Agree	20	39.2	40.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

The data Analysis of sense of belongings given by the Telecom Company to provide satisfactory service to the customer.

BELONGINGS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	somewhat agree	10	19.6	20.0	20.0
	agree	19	37.3	38.0	58.0
	strongly agree	21	41.2	42.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

TIME

The data analysis of Time utility of the consumer by the Telecommunication service provider towards the customer's satisfaction.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	13	25.5	26.0	26.0
	disagree	20	39.2	40.0	66.0
	somewhat disagree	17	33.3	34.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

EXPERIENCE

The data analysis of employee last experience satisfaction with our company.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	13	25.5	26.0	26.0
	disagree	23	45.1	46.0	72.0
	somewhat disagree	14	27.5	28.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

CONNECTIVITY

The data analysis of consumer perception and behaviour towards the telecommunication service provider.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	14	27.5	28.0	28.0
disagree	23	45.1	46.0	74.0
somewhat disagree	13	25.5	26.0	100.0
Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.0		
Total	51	100.0		

REFERENCE

The Data Analysis of the consumer perception framed on basis of References.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	8	15.7	16.0	16.0
disagree	10	19.6	20.0	36.0
somewhat disagree	9	17.6	18.0	54.0
neutral	13	25.5	26.0	80.0
somewhat agree	10	19.6	20.0	100.0
Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.0		

REFERENCE

The Data Analysis of the consumer perception framed on basis of References.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	8	15.7	16.0	16.0
	disagree	10	19.6	20.0	36.0
	somewhat disagree	9	17.6	18.0	54.0
	neutral	13	25.5	26.0	80.0
	somewhat agree	10	19.6	20.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

The Data analysis of the respondents who respond on the use of the service of Telecom by service provider

USE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	neutral	2	3.9	4.0	4.0
	somewhat agree	15	29.4	30.0	34.0
	agree	20	39.2	40.0	74.0
	strongly agree	13	25.5	26.0	100.0

Total		50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

The Data Analysis of respondents on basis of price comparability

PRICE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	somewhat agree	17	33.3	34.0	34.0
	agree	18	35.3	36.0	70.0
	strongly agree	15	29.4	30.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

PLANS

Data Analysis of the consumers attitude due to less plans provided by telecommunication providers.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	somewhat agree	10	19.6	20.0	20.0
	agree	22	43.1	44.0	64.0
	strongly agree	18	35.3	36.0	100.0

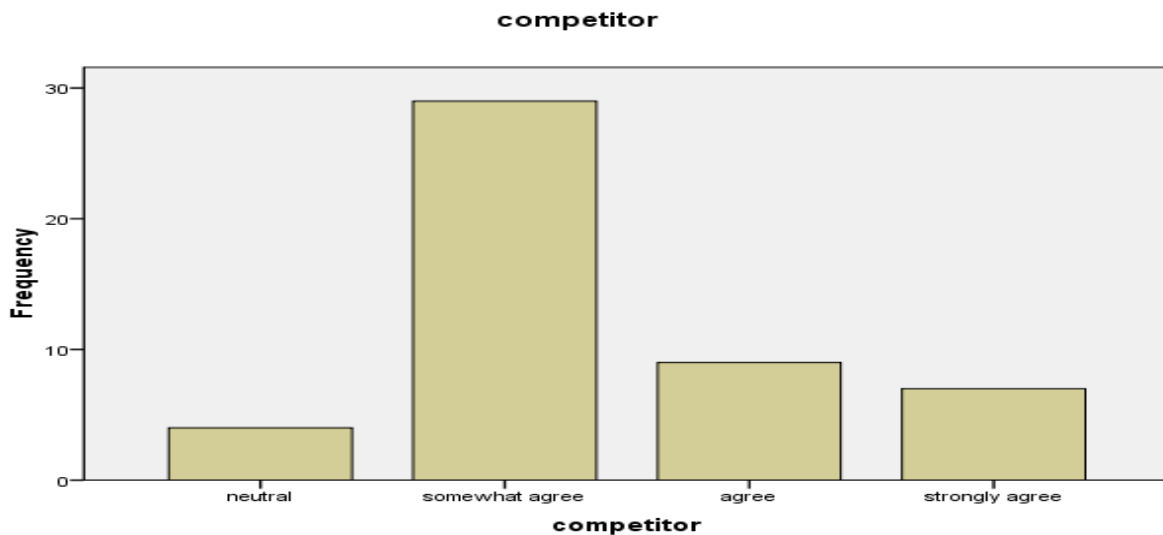
Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.0		
Total	51	100.0		

EXCESS BILL

Data Analysis on basis of consumer response due to Excess of bill.

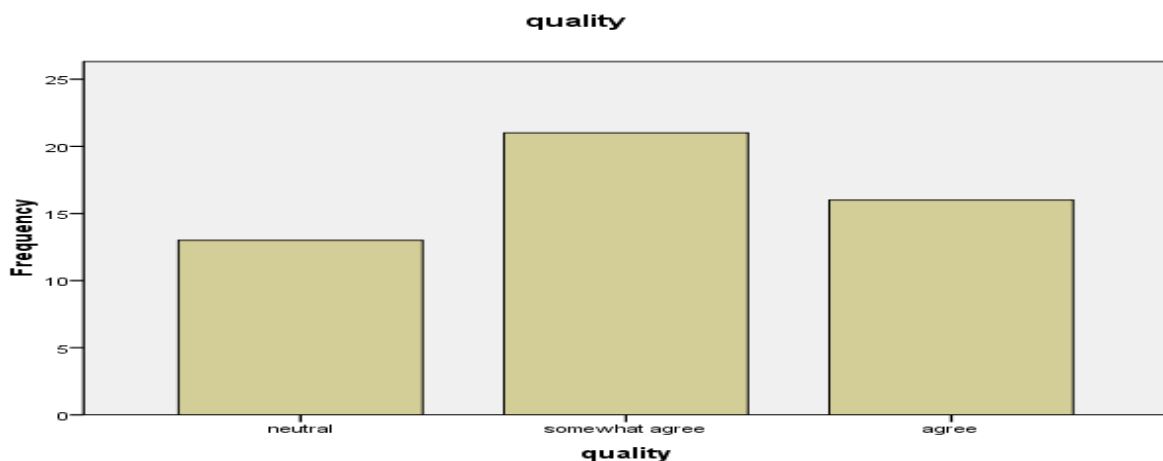
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neutral	18	35.3	36.0	36.0
somewhat agree	10	19.6	20.0	56.0
agree	8	15.7	16.0	72.0
strongly agree	14	27.5	28.0	100.0
Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.0		
Total	51	100.0		

The chart indicates the competitors who influence on the consumer perception to switch to the other mobile services.



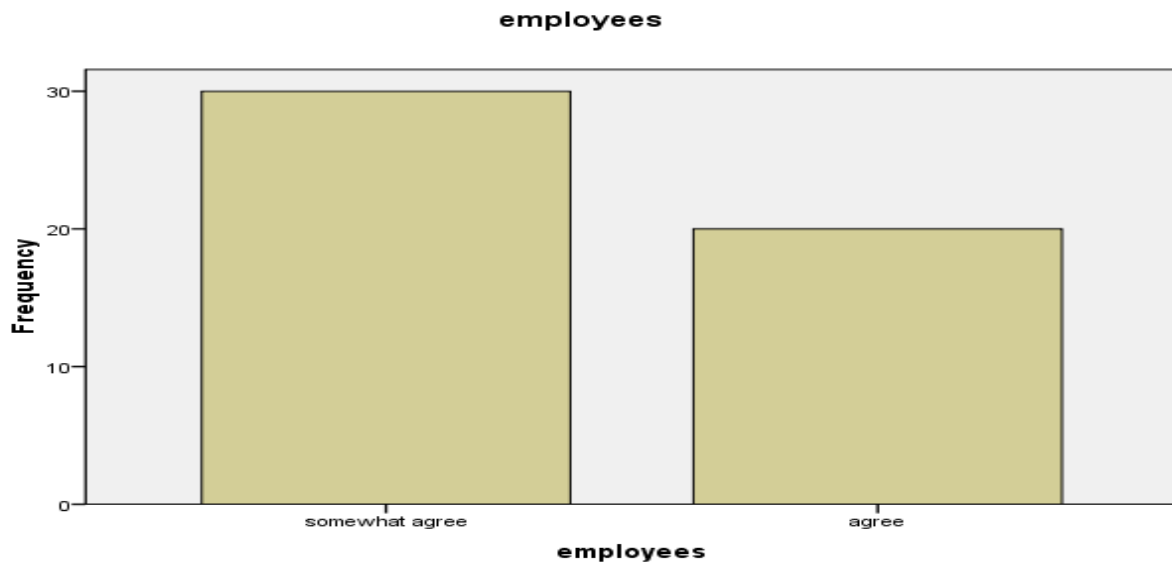
The chart indicates that maximum respondents are influenced by the competitor actions.

The data analysis indicates that the respondents are influenced by the quality of the service provided by the Telecommunication service provider



The data analysis of respondent indicates that on the basis of the quality of service , quick service provide to the consumer by the telecommunication service provider that clearly indicates that the consumers are somewhat mostly influenced due to quality and switch to other.

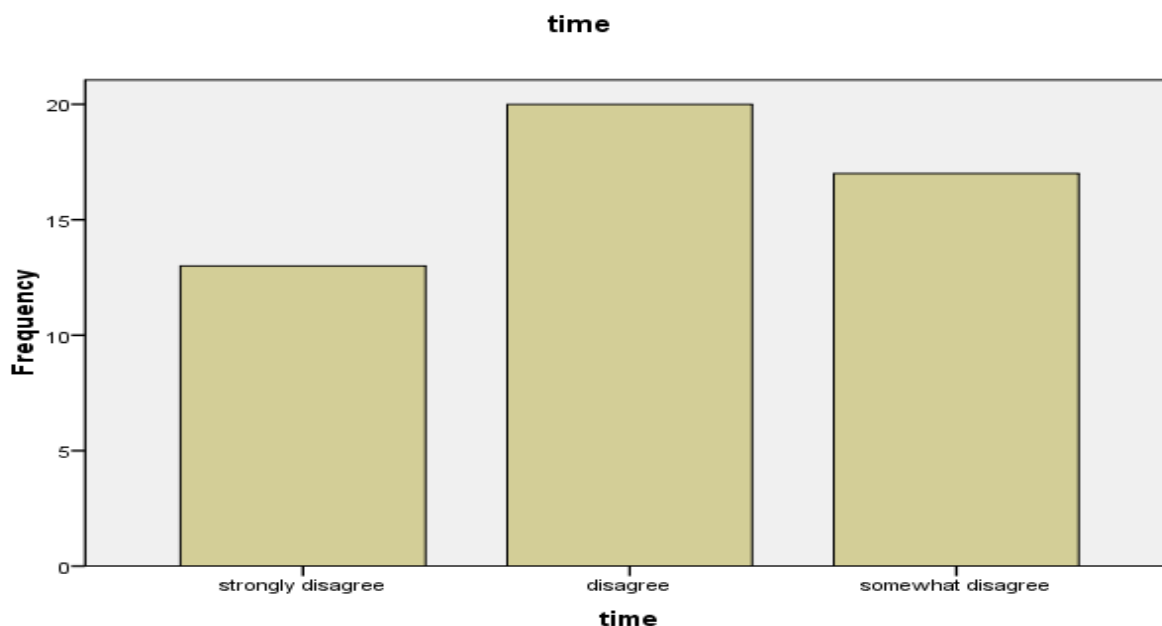
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the employees behaviour towards the consumers grievances, their reaction towards problems, the data indicates clearly that employees behaviour towards the problems somewhat affect more on the perception of the consumer and affect on switch to other service provider.



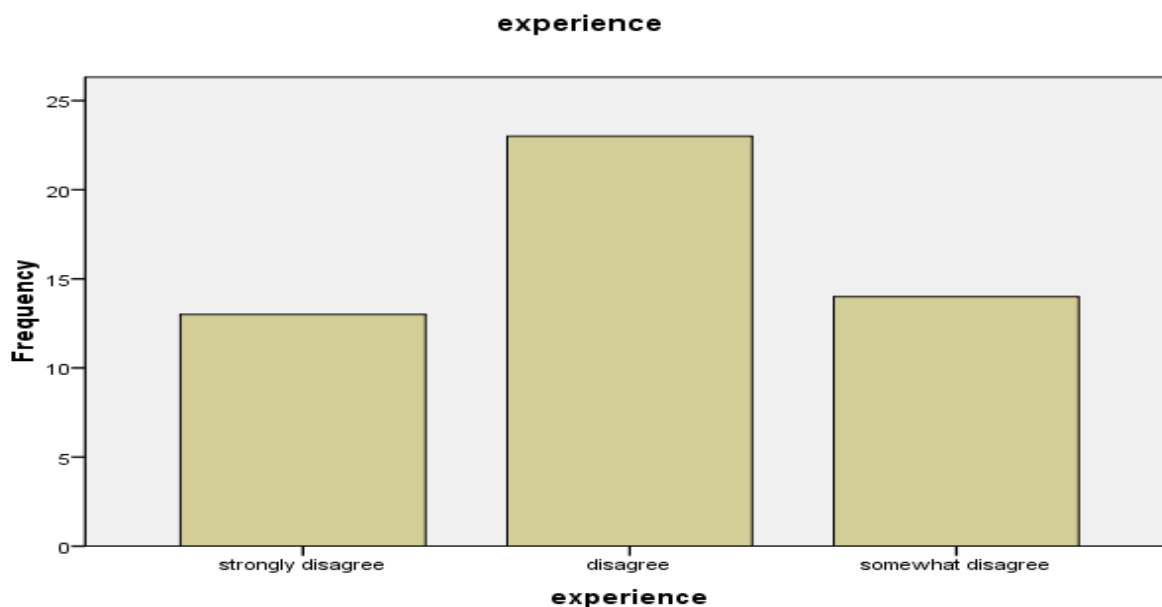
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the employees behaviour towards the consumers and make them feel that they are the part of the organisation and the they are understanding their hassle, the data indicates clearly that employees behaviour of feel of belongingness somewhat affect more on the perception of the consumer and affect on switch to other service provider.



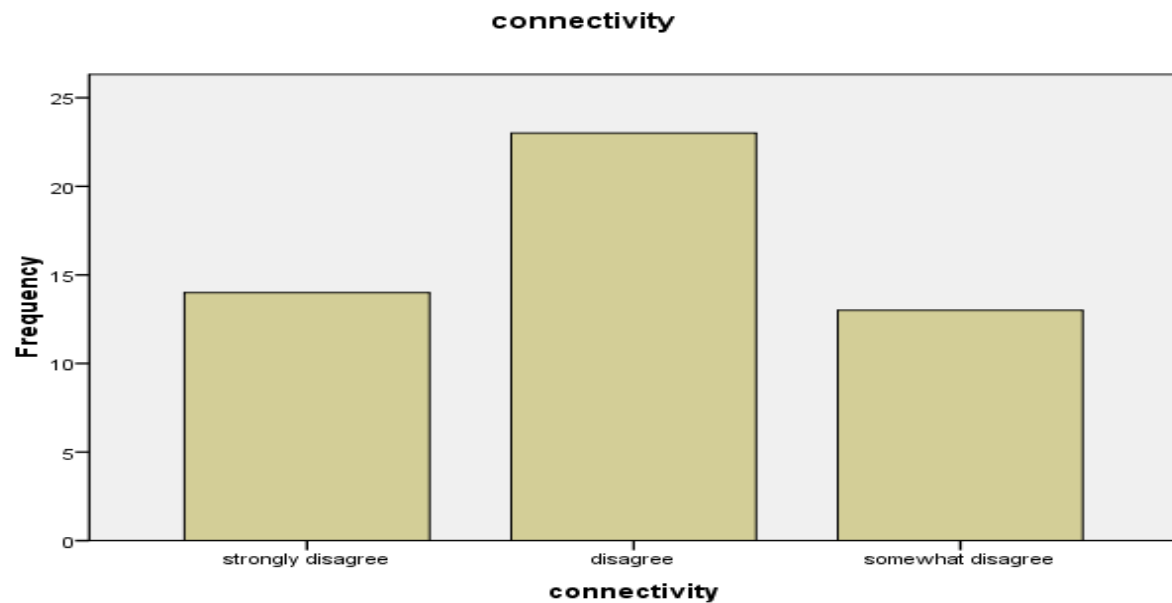
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the employees behaviour towards giving importance to the time of the consumers and taking the action towards problems faced by them with full privilege of time, the data indicates clearly that employees behaviour towards the importance given to the time somewhat affect more on the perception of the consumer and affect on switch to other service provider.



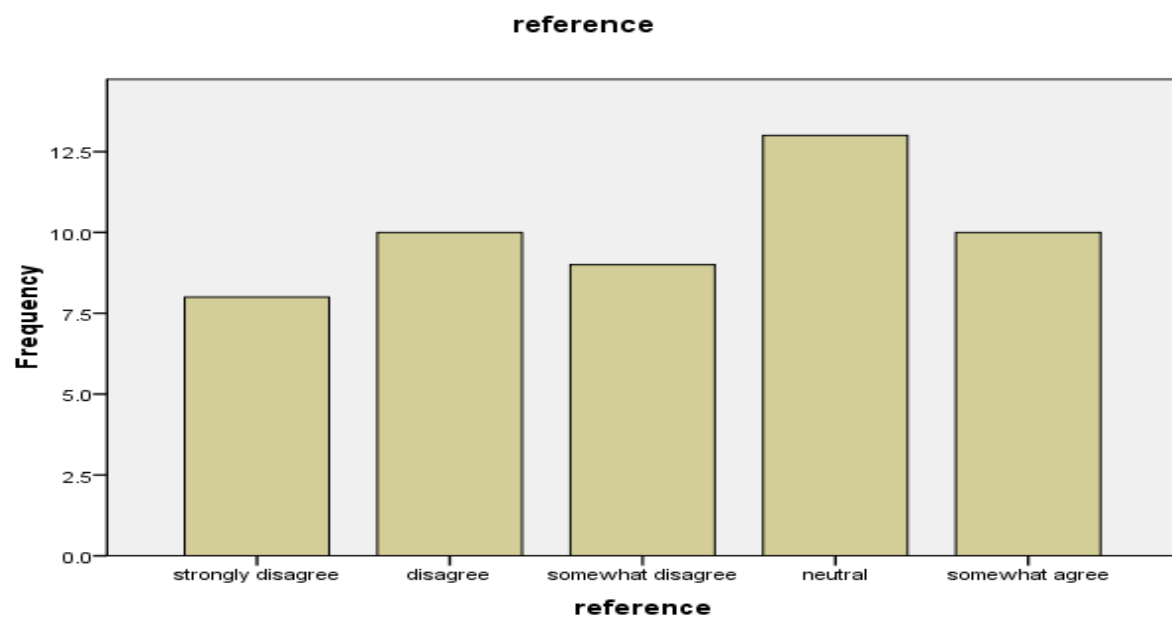
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the past experience of the consumer from the last consumed telecommunication service provider. The data indicates clearly that maximum consumers affected due to the last experience and switch to other service provider.



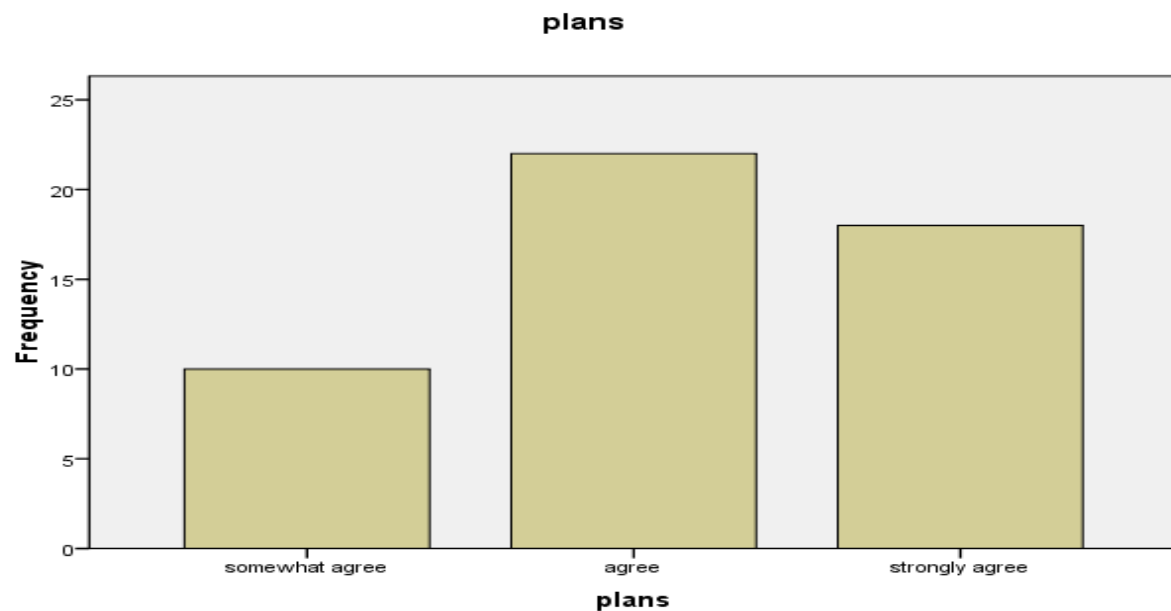
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the connectivity problem also affects on the consumer perception and leads to switch to new telecommunication service provider.



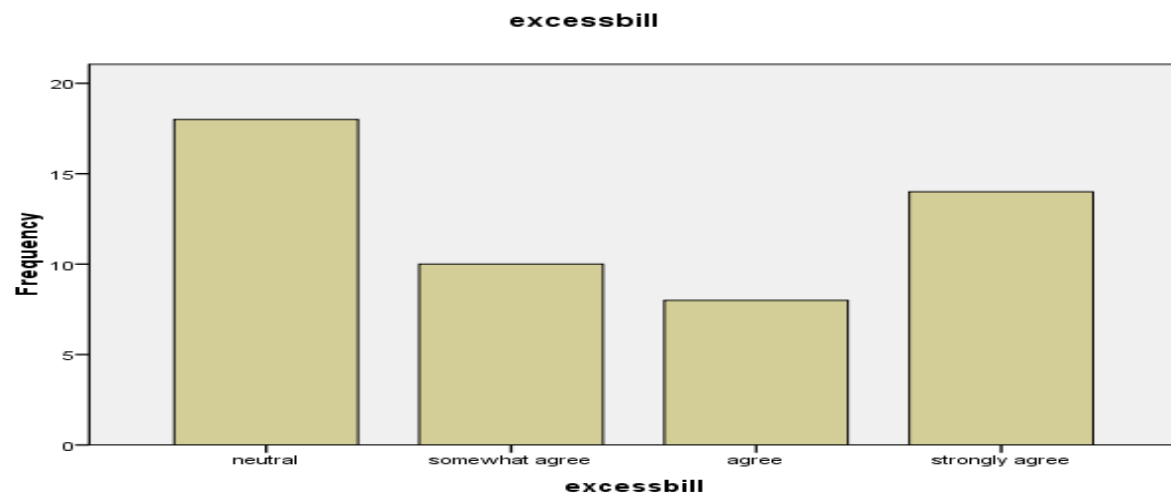
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the past experience of the consumer and references of the family members and the relatives affect on the consumer perception and the decision to switch to new telecommunication service provider.



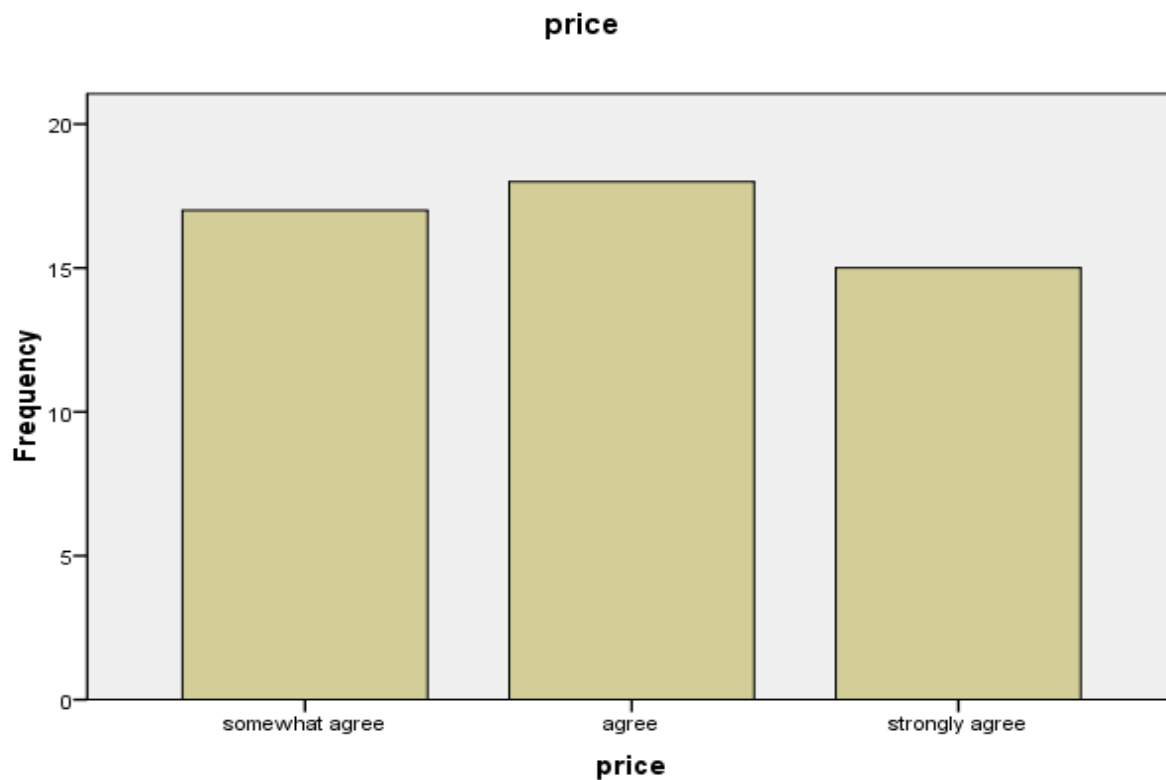
The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the maximum number of the respondents change to new service provider as they find very less plans in their service provider.



The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the excess of bill somehow another factor which influenced the consumer to switch and make perception about telecommunication service provider. The data indicates clearly that maximum consumers affected due to the excess bill and switch to other service provider.



The data analysis of the respondents indicates that the price charged is somehow another factor which influenced the consumer to switch and make perception about telecommunication service provider. The data indicates clearly that maximum consumers affected due to the excess of price charged for the service and switch to other service provider.



The cumulative sheet which indicates the percentage of consumer with their mean, median, mode, variances, kurtosis, variance to the related statements.

STATISTICS

		competitor	quality	employees	belongings	time	experience	connectivity	reference	plans	excess bill	Respondent	use	price
N	Valid	49	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	51	50	50
	Missing	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Mean		5.39	5.06	5.40	6.22	2.08	2.02	1.98	3.14	6.16	5.36		5.88	5.96
Median		5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	6.00	5.00		6.00	6.00
Mode		5	5	5	7	2	2	2	4	6	4		6	6
Variance		.701	.588	.245	.583	.606	.551	.551	1.919	.545	1.541		.720	.651
Kurtosis		-.117	-1.265	-1.900	-1.161	1.315	-1.140	-1.140	-1.241	1.092	1.597		-.770	1.454
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.668	.662	.662	.662	.662	.662	.662	.662	.662	.662		.662	.662
Range		3	2	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	3		3	2

Percentile 25	5.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	6.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
50	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	6.00
75	6.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00

The Correlation Matrix is as below:

CORRELATIONS

		Price	quality	employees	use	connectivity	time
price	Pearson Correlation	1	.400**	-.164	-.007	-.308*	.233
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.257	.961	.030	.104
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
quality	Pearson Correlation	.400**	1	-.118	-.114	-.070	-.282*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.413	.430	.631	.047
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50

employees	Pearson Correlation	-.164	-.118	1	-.224	.300*	-.191
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.257	.413		.119	.034	.185
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
use	Pearson Correlation	-.007	-.114	-.224	1	.126	-.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.961	.430	.119		.384	.746
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
connectivity	Pearson Correlation	-.308*	-.070	.300*	.126	1	-.315*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.631	.034	.384		.026
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
time	Pearson Correlation	.233	-.282*	-.191	-.047	-.315*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.047	.185	.746	.026	
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672 ^a	.451	.389		.854

a. Predictors: (Constant), excess bill, connectivity, reference, employees, plans

ANOVA^s

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.383	5	5.277	7.229	.000 ^a
	Residual	32.117	44	.730		
	Total	58.500	49			

a. Predictors: (Constant), excess bill, connectivity, reference, employees, plans

b. Dependent Variable: Professional

COEFFICIENTS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	5.735	2.241		2.559	.014
	employees	.371	.309	.168	1.200	.236
	connectivity	.516	.175	.350	2.946	.005
	reference	-.541	.097	-.685	-5.595	.000
	plans	-.111	.259	-.075	-.430	.670
	excess bill	-.126	.153	-.144	-.828	.412

MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672 ^a	.451	.389		.854

a. Dependent Variable: Professional

CONCLUSION

The service providers must plan for “what if” scenario, have technologically driven processes, recruit people with tight attitudes and just skills, and have strategic alliances with suppliers and intermediaries. The service providers must overcome the following challenges to provide excellent service quality:

Challenge of learning, using time as a competitive weapon, Demand for dramatic leadership, successfully managing globalization and trans-nationalization, paying attention to customer responsiveness, service, and quality. Using technology and information system as competitive weapons, combining systems thinking with intuition, creativity and leadership to break down artificial barriers between the firm and its customers and suppliers.

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