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## Does Service Quality Factors Effect to Select a Tele Communication Service Provider?

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### ABSTRACT

Telecommunication sector plays vital role in modern society ,enabling reliable and fast communication. Service providers in this sector try to attract customers, providing advanced technological facilities in addition to their basic services. Even though service providers promote their services, due to the limitation of services, cost of telecommunication infrastructure satisfying all types of customers are challenging task. Researches on “does service quality factors effect to select a telecommunication provider” loaded with inconclusive results. Literatures of the research, identifies Network Quality, Value Added Services, Pricing Plans, Employee Competency, Billing & prepaid Card System, Customer Service, Convenience and Security as major attributes which customers concern when selecting service providers. Understanding these factors and customers’ evaluation of services provides is important for deciding on better decision making. This research conducted in Sri Lanka which shows substantial growth in the mobile telecommunication industry. The population of the study consists with telecommunication service users in the Kandy urban area of Sri Lanka. The sample of the study consists with 350 mobile telecommunication subscribers in the Kandy urban area in the year 2015. Concluding about research hypothesis are done based on inferential statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. According to research results each factor identified in research model positively and significantly associate with the customers’ decision on selecting a service provider which describes the customer satisfaction. According to the regression analysis factors given above explain 50 percent of the customers’ decision of selecting and retain in a telecommunication service provider.

**KEYWORDS:** Customer Satisfaction, Service Providers, Telecommunication Sector.

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## 1 Introduction

Telecommunication services are a vital resource for most of the data and information related activities in modern society. Availability of quality, high end technology based telecommunication services make better life enhancing productivity and satisfaction of customers. Characteristics of different persons, their values and experience strictly bound with customer satisfaction. Even though a vast number of Telecommunication service providers are available in Sri Lanka, still people do not satisfy on the level of service offered by the service providers. Investigating factors impact on customer satisfaction in Telecommunication service sector is important.

Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality services means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis. (Lewis and Booms, 1983). Service quality are considered as an important tool for a firm's struggle to differentiate itself from its competitors (Ladhari, 2008). The relevance of service quality to companies is emphasized here, especially the fact that it offers a competitive advantage to companies that strive to improve it and hence bring customer satisfaction

Customers evaluate service quality of their mobile phone operators based on quality of six dimensions, including network, value-added services, mobile devices, customer service, pricing structure and billing system. This scale was administered to two hundred five residential, non-business mobile phone users in Greece. Their findings show that customer service, pricing structure and billing system are the service quality dimensions that have the most significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, which in turn have significant positive impact on customer loyalty (Santouridis&Trivellas, 2010).

This research investigates whether the identified factors describe the customer satisfaction in telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. Further the research investigates the customer satisfaction of telecommunication sector where highly dynamic;service oriented and rely on technology. Telecommunication service providers use different strategies to take over the market, strategy may be technology orient or marketing related, ultimately the customer reacts on service provider if the service provider does not provide what they promised and what customer hoped. This research study on behavioral aspect of customer satisfaction towards telecommunication service providers in Sri Lanka.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Models of service quality

Parasuraman et al., (1985), developed a model of service quality after carrying out a study on four service settings: retail banking, credit card services, repair and maintenance of electrical appliances, and long-distance telephone services. The SERVQUAL model represents service quality as the discrepancy between a customer's expectations of service offering and the customer's perceptions of the service received (Parasuraman et al., (1985). This makes it an attitude measure. What this model strives to measure exactly is the consumer perception of the service quality which depends on the size of the gap between expected service and perceived service which in turn, depends on the gaps under the control of the service provider such as delivery of service, marketing, (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This measurement of service quality is based on both on how consumer evaluates the service delivery process and the outcome of the service, (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p.42). A good service quality is considered as one which meets or exceeds consumer's expectation of the service (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p.46).

The SERVQUAL model was made of ten dimensions of service quality when created; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access, Parasuraman et al., (1985, p.47-48) but later on these dimensions were reduced to five because some dimensions were overlapping (communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding customers and access) and they included, Tangibles- physical facilities, equipments, and staff appearance. Reliability- ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; Responsiveness- willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; Assurance- knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; Empathy- caring, individual attention the firm provides its customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23).

These dimensions mainly focus on the human aspects of service delivery responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy) and the tangibles of service. According to study carried out by Ladhari, (2009), it

is recommended that the SERVQUAL model is a good scale to use when measuring service quality in various specific industries, but that it is appropriate to choose the most important dimensions of this model that fit for that particular service being measured in order to assure reliable and valid results. In this regard, we will use this model because it takes into account customer's expectation of a service as well as perceptions of the service which is the best way to measure service quality in the service sector (Shahin, 2005). Buttle, (1996) mentions of several researchers that have used the SERVQUAL model in various industries (retailing, restaurants, banking, telecommunication industry, airline catering, local government, hotels, hospitals, and education). He further suggests that service quality has become an important topic because of its apparent relationship to costs, profitability, customer satisfaction, customer retention and positive word of mouth and it is widely considered as a driver of corporate marketing and financial performance.

## 2.2 Service quality in mobile telecommunication industry

In mobile telecommunication literature, service quality has been conceptualized in different ways. The most adopted generic model is SERVQUAL is to measure service quality in the mobile telecommunication industry. The mostly adapted generic model is SERVQUAL to measure mobile service quality (Boohene&Agyapong, 2011; Leisen& Vance, 2001; Negi, 2009; Wang & Lo, 2002).

Moreover, SERVQUAL or SERVPERF, as very general instruments, are inadequate to measure mobile service qualities in making satisfactory service related decisions because the dimensions of service quality depend on the type of service offered (Babakus & Boller, 1992). Negi (2009) tried to modify the SERVQUAL scale to best fit in the context of the mobile telecommunication market in Ethiopia. In a pilot study, respondents were asked about additional service quality dimensions by using open-ended questions. Three additional dimensions were derived, including network quality, compliant handling and service convenience. According to regression analysis, network quality scored the highest in predicting overall customer satisfaction followed by reliability, empathy and assurance (Negi, 2009).

Wang and Lo (2002) employed a modified version of the SERVQUAL model to measure service quality of mobile phone operators in China. They added network quality dimension to the model based on focus group discussions and expert opinions. According to their findings based on structural equation modeling, the most important service quality dimensions in predicting customers' overall satisfaction was assurance, followed by reliability and network quality. But they found no evidence to support the influence of responsiveness and empathy on customer satisfaction (Wang & Lo, 2002). Eshghi et al (2008) identified thirty two attributes relevant to mobile telecommunication industry. Six factors were derived using factor analysis including relational quality, competitiveness, reliability, reputation, customer support and transmission quality.

Lu et al. (2009) developed a multidimensional and hierarchical model to measure mobile service quality. They proposed that mobile service quality was composed of three primary dimensions, which are interaction quality, environment quality and outcome quality. Each primary dimensions further included sub-dimensions. Their findings showed that all three dimensions of service quality have a significant and positive effect on customer's satisfaction and continuance intention (Zhao et al 2012). Santouridis and Trivellas (2010) suggested that customers evaluate service quality of their mobile phone operators based on quality of six dimensions, including network, value-added services, mobile devices, customer service, pricing structure and billing system. This scale was administered to two hundred five residential, non-business mobile phone users in Greece. Their findings show that customer service, pricing structure and billing system are the service quality dimensions that have the most significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, which in turn have significant positive impact on customer loyalty (Santouridis&Trivellas, 2010).

## 2.3 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a well-known and established concept in several areas like marketing, consumer research, economic psychology, welfare economics and economics. Several scholars have defined satisfaction in a different way. Customer satisfaction has been a central concept in marketing literature and

it is an important goal of business activities, because today companies face rigid competition.

The importance of customers has been highlighted by many researchers and academicians. The principle concern of marketing is to connect with customers by building a strong customer relationship on order to meet their expectations. The most common interpretations obtained from various authors reflect the notion that satisfaction is a feeling which results from a process of evaluating what has been received against what was expected, including the purchase decision itself and the needs and wants association with the purchase (Armstrong & Kotler 1996). Kotler et al 2000, defined satisfaction as “A persons’ feeling or pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product perceived performance in relation to his or her expectations.

Satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate what they receive, regarding the fulfillment of some need, goal or desire (Hansemark and albinsson2004). Oliver (1981) defined satisfaction “as a summary of psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience. Customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the consumptions experience with a product/ service (Yi 1990).Parasuraman et al (1988) distinguished service quality and satisfaction “perceived service quality is a global judgment or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction. Henkel et al (2006) found satisfied customers of telecom sector have high extent of usage and intentions to repurchase in service quality, service vale, and satisfaction are all directly linked to customers intensions of usage.

### 3 Methodology

This section revels the methodological approach of the study. The objectives of the study include identifying factors and their impact on customer satisfaction towards telecommunication service providers in Sri Lanka. The research question of the study goes around does service quality factors effect on selecting a TeleCommunication Service Provider.

#### 3.1 Conceptual framework

Conceptual Framework shows the variables which use to find the Impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunication industry. To measure the service quality, study using multidimensional model /MS-Qual which is developed by the SeyedYaghoubHosseini, ManijehBahreiniZadeh, AlirezaZiaeiBideh.,(2013).

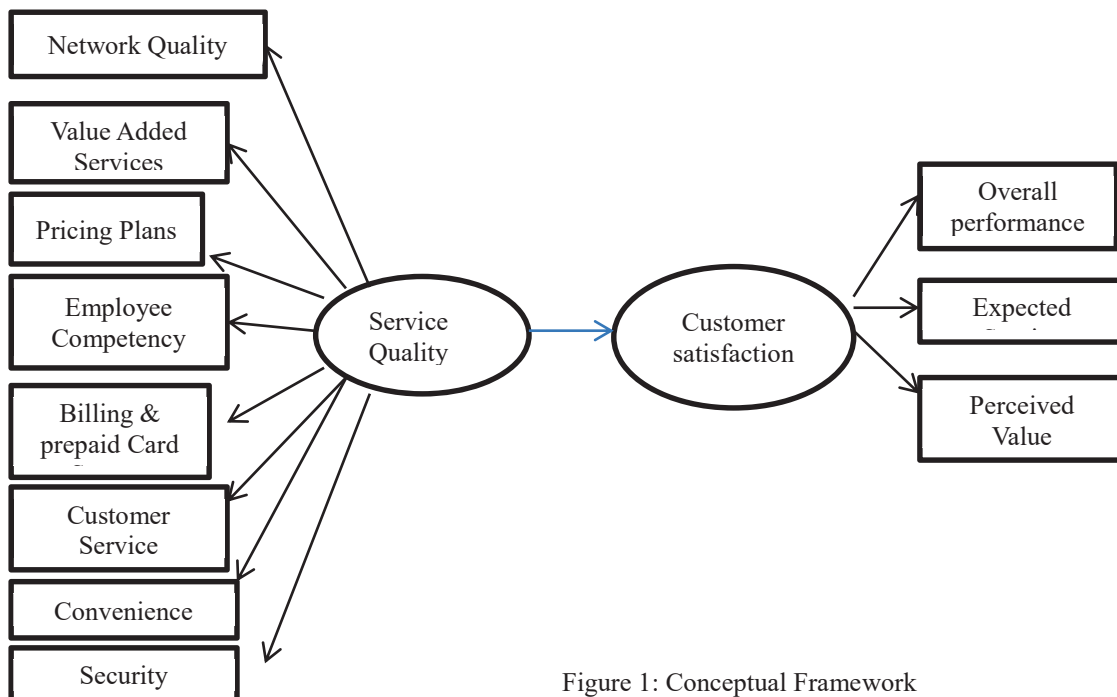


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The population of this study consist mobile phone subscribers living in the Kandy Urban area. The sample of the study consists with 350 mobile telecommunication subscribers in the Kandy urban area in year 2015 selected using the convenience sampling method.

### 3.2 Reliability of the instrument

All the constructs of the study were tested for the consistency, reliability of the items within the constructs using Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. In conclusion, the results showed that the scores of the Cronbach's alpha for all the constructs exceeded the threshold of 0.70 indicating that the measurement scales of the constructs were internal consistency & reliability.

### 3.3 Hypotheses

Hypotheses of the study around the variables; Network Quality, Value added services, pricing plans, employee competency, billing & prepaid card system, customer service, convenience, Security.

H1: There is a significant impact of Network Quality on customer satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant impact of Value added services on customer satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant impact of pricing plans on customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant impact of employee competency on customer satisfaction.

H5: There is a significant impact of billing & prepaid card process on customer satisfaction.

H6: There is a significant impact of customer service on customer satisfaction.

H7: There is a significant impact of convenience on customer satisfaction.

H8: There is an impact of between Security on customer satisfaction.

## 4 Data Analysis and Results

This section of the paper presents the data analysis of the research, Analysis utilizes descriptive and inferential statistics; Pearson Correlation and regression analysis details the relationship and impact of the research.

### 4.1 Dimensional level Analysis of Conceptual Framework

The analysis of the dimensional level and variable level relationship and impact among independent and dependent variables of the research are as follows.

#### 4.1.1 *Service quality Dimensions*

Service quality is the independent variable of research. Service quality is measured using eight dimensions. The Table 1 shows a summary of the overall satisfaction level of service quality dimensions by means of mean scores and standard deviation and Table 3 shows mean the instrument used a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to measure the satisfaction level. The mean score for all service quality dimensions except Network quality and pricing plans are above 3.5 which indicate that respondents are satisfied with that service quality attributes provided by service providers. The scores on network quality and pricing plans respectively (mean- 3.2997, 3.2706) indicate that respondents are somewhat satisfied on these service attributes. Respondents have rated security as the highest favorable satisfied dimension of service quality which mean value is 3.83. It demonstrate mobile phone subscribers are gratified with security of their calls, messages, personal details and etc by service providers of mobile telecommunication industry. Means of Value Added Services, Employee Competency, Billing and pre-paid card process, Customer Service and Convenience convince that service providers provide satisfied service to great extent for these attributes. However standard deviation of all dimensions also takes relatively high value. It means this mean scores can be dispersed into higher range.

Table 1. Mean and Standard deviation of service quality dimensions

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Network Quality	350	1.00	5.00	3.2997	.71832
Value added service	350	1.50	5.00	3.6951	.60003
Pricing Plans	350	1.40	5.00	3.2706	.67342
Employee Competency	350	2.00	5.00	3.7207	.69796
Billing and Prepaid card process	350	1.50	5.00	3.7191	.61894
Customer service	350	1.60	5.00	3.7183	.66242
Convenience	350	1.75	5.00	3.7522	.69104
Security	350	1.00	5.00	3.8300	.80232

Source: Survey Data

#### 4.1.2 Customer satisfaction dimensions

Customer satisfaction is dependent variable of the study. The table 2 shows the customer satisfaction level under the each customer satisfaction attributes by means of mean scores and standard deviation of customer satisfaction dimensions. Most of Respondents delight with their service providers performance, it verify mean value of overall performance satisfaction, which is 4.0767.respectivly Expected service and Perceived value also possess high mean score.it means respondents satisfied with their expectation and perceived level of service quality relative to the price paid.Standard deviation for all dimensions is high. That means these mean scores can be dispersed into higher range.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of customer satisfaction dimensions

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Overall Performance Satisfaction	350	1.00	5.00	4.0767	.79793
Expected Service	350	1.50	5.00	3.7133	.73582
Perceived Value	350	1.00	5.00	3.5533	.93073

Source: Survey Data

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of dependent and independent variable

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Service Quality	350	1.69	4.80	3.6268	.47125
Customer Satisfaction	350	1.67	5.00	3.7811	.65429

Source: Survey Data

Table 3 presents a satisfaction level regarding the mobile telecommunications service quality and customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunication industry. Service quality mean value demonstrate respondents perceive favorable service quality. And Mean value of customer satisfaction is 3.78 prove respondents enjoy with high level satisfaction with the mobile telecommunication service.

#### 4.1.3 Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

The Table 4 indicates the relationship between the overall service quality and customer satisfaction. Correlation coefficient between service quality and customer satisfaction is 0.681 this value is significant at the significance level of 0.01. The results indicate that the overall service quality has a strong significant positive relationship with the Customer satisfaction according to the rule of thumb ( $r=0.681, p<0.01$ ).

Table 4 Correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.681**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

The table 5 also shows the relationship between the each of eight dimensions of service quality with the satisfaction. According to the table 5 Security, Network Quality, Pricing Plans, Employee Competency, Billing and pre-paid card system, Customer Service and Convenience all these dimensions except value added service have moderate positive relationship with customer satisfaction at the significant level 0.01.

Table 5 correlation between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction

		<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>
Network Quality	Pearson Correlation	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Value Added Services	Pearson Correlation	.358**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Pricing Plans	Pearson Correlation	.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Employee competency	Pearson Correlation	.447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Billing and Prepaid card process	Pearson Correlation	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Customer Service	Pearson Correlation	.487**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Security	Pearson Correlation	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

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

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

Source: Survey Data

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

The analysis shows to what extent dependent variable (customer satisfaction) is possible to explain by the independent variables dimensions which are network quality, value added services, pricing plans,

employee competency, Billing and prepaid card process, Customer Service, Convenience and Security

Table 6 Model summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.730 <sup>a</sup>	.533	.506	.45871

a. Predictors: (Constant), SE, NQ, CS, PP, CO, VAS, BP, EC

The linear regression analysis of the model presented in Table 6 reveals that the R-square of the model is .533. This means the model explains 53.3 % of the variance in the dependent variable by the independent variables. R2 tells us the extent to which independent variables predicting the dependent variable in the given model. According to the Table 6 result customer satisfaction variance can be predicted 53.3% by Network Quality, value added services, pricing plans, employee competency, Billing and prepaid card process, Customer Service, Convenience and Security. Adjusted R2 is a modification of R2 that adjusts for the number of explanatory terms in a model. Unlike R2, the adjusted R2 increases only if the new term improves the model more than would be expected by chance. In this case, the adjusted R-squared indicates that about 50.6% of the variability of customer satisfaction is accounted for by the model, even after taking into account the number of predictor variables in the model.

Table 7 coefficients of independent dimensions

**Coefficients <sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.444	.302		1.469	.144
NQ	.199	.060	.221	3.289	.001
VAS	-.077	.089	-.071	-.871	.385
PP	.152	.072	.158	2.103	.037
EC	-.015	.086	-.016	-.168	.866
BP	.047	.091	.045	.516	.607
CS	.160	.077	.163	2.072	.040
CO	.160	.068	.170	2.347	.020
SE	.300	.061	.372	4.956	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

It was obvious that Network Quality, Pricing Plans, Customer Service, Convenience and Security have a positive impact in the variation of Customer Satisfaction as p-values are 0.001, 0.037, 0.040, 0.020 and 0.000 are significant respectively at the significant level 0.05. The value added services, employee competency, Billing and prepaid card process have no significant contribution in the variation of customer satisfaction as the p-value 0.385, 0.866 and 0.607 respectively are higher than significant level 0.05. The coefficients for each of the variables indicates the amount of change could expect in customer satisfaction given a one-unit change in the value of that variable, given that all other variables in the model are held constant. For example, consider the variable network quality. It indicates an increase of 0.199 in



the customer satisfaction score for every one unit increase in network quality, assuming that all other variables in the model are held constant.

## 5 Conclusion

The results analysis of the research indicates that Network Quality, Pricing plans, Customer service, Convenience and Security are service quality dimensions that have a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction in mobile telecommunication services. Further, all the independent variables are positively correlated with customer satisfaction.

### 5.1 Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a significant impact of Network Quality on customer satisfaction. H1 is accepted as  $B=0.199$  and the impact is significant (0.001)

H2: There is a significant impact of Value added services on customer satisfaction. H2 is not accepted as impact is insignificant (0.385)

H3: There is a significant impact of pricing plans on customer satisfaction. H3 is accepted as  $B=0.152$  and the impact is significant (0.037)

H4: There is a significant impact of employee competency on customer satisfaction. H4 is not accepted as impact is insignificant (0.866)

H5: There is a significant impact of billing & prepaid card process on customer satisfaction. H5 is not accepted as the impact is insignificant (0.607)

H6: There is a significant impact of customer service on customer satisfaction. H6 is accepted as  $B=0.160$  and the impact is significant (0.040)

H7: There is a significant impact of convenience on customer satisfaction. H7 is accepted as  $B=0.160$  and the impact is significant (0.020)

H8: There is a impact of between Security on customer satisfaction. H3 is accepted as  $B=0.300$  and the impact is significant (0.000)

An evaluation of the relative importance of service quality dimensions is essential to identify the impact of these dimensions on customer satisfaction of mobile phone service quality. This would serve to identify the relevant parties concerned to identify and undertake necessary initiatives to improve those aspects that customers value the most. According to research analysis, some variables of service quality attribute, positively influence for customer satisfaction. In the mobile telecommunication service, management's strategy should be directed to focus improving service quality to improve the customer satisfaction in order to remain in the industry and achieve their goals. Results indicate that the most important service quality dimension on customer satisfaction was security which goes to prove that security was perceived as a dominant service quality improvement in customer satisfaction levels. Therefore service providers must pay attention to confirm the security of mobile subscribers personal regarding of call, message, and information about subscribers likewise. Service Providers must concern about Provision of accurate billing, Ease of understanding, Resolving billing issues quickly, methods of payment of bills, Allowed time period for settling the bill, Prepaid card activation, Instruction for activation and inquiry facility for prepaid card problem, Prepaid card validity period. It will be lead in high customer satisfaction as well as customer service is a much better chance of retention and acquisition of more subscribers. However, the results of this study show that value added service is the least important factor in customer's satisfaction. It may happen because of Lately mobile phone users enjoy access to value-added services in addition to basic voice communication rapidly. it has become a familiar attribute of service quality. That's why providing various value added service is not supported to enhance a high level of customer satisfaction. Research findings shows convenience, pricing plans, employee competency and network quality are also important factors to raise the customer satisfaction.

These findings indicate that enhancing quality of services in the mobile telecommunication industry

provides competitive advantages over their competitors mobile phone operators. As well as Service quality is not only important factor for the customer satisfaction of Mobile telecommunication industry. According to the Regression analysis ultimately researcher can determine Best predictors of Service quality about customer satisfaction as Security, Network Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Convenience and Pricing Plans.

## 5.2 Limitations of the study

This research based on Limited geographical area and for the penalization of the results data are needed to collect from the entire country, Some variables such as language skills, technical skills and users' previous experience will moderate and intervene the relationship of customer satisfaction and service quality dimension. The theoretical arguments given for the service quality model are also valid for this model too.

## 5.3 Future researches

In future research impact of moderate variables on customer satisfaction can be studied. Demographic impact on customer satisfaction in telecommunication service provider is another area, Further, theoretical framework can be tested with different telecommunication services.

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