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EXPLORING THE FACTORS AFFECTING USER SATISFACTION OF DIALOG AXIATA PLC COMPANY PRODUCTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is the central theme of this study. Dialog Axiata PLC has been selected for this research. This company is a leading communication service provider under the telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka. However, according to the market observation of the management of Dialog Axiata PLC, customer satisfaction is not seemed as favourable because the number of customers is declining over the last few years. By taking this information as a basis, researchers have explored the factors that affect customer satisfaction in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication industry. The objectives of this study are to explore the factors that influence customer satisfaction on the services provided by Dialog Axiata PLC and suggest strategies to improve Dialog Axiata PLC's customer satisfaction level. Researchers of this study have established qualitative research and deductive approach since all data presented is based on past research articles and models. As the sample of the study, the researchers selected ten relevant research articles and factors that affect customer satisfaction. To analyse the factors affecting customer satisfaction, the thematic analysis and narrative writing from the existing literature have been used. Based on the identified factors that determine customer satisfaction, the relevant factors for the context of the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry, have been selected and incorporated into the researchers' developed conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was developed based on the factors, which are most appropriate to the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry such as app performance (low interruptions), complaints management, empathy, pricing, reliability and social media memes. Those

identified factors have been considered as predictors (Independent variables) of customer satisfaction (Dependent variable) of telecommunication customers. Finally, future researchers are motivated to gather more definite findings by collecting primary data and measuring data to analyse these factors. And also, they can explore other key factors that may have an impact on customer satisfaction. This conducted research work fulfilled the knowledge gap on the area of factors affecting the satisfaction of customers who was benefitting from the products and services of telecommunication companies and enhanced the knowledge of researchers of the current study and future studies on this theme.

Keywords: app performance, customer satisfaction, social media memes and telecommunication industry

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a crucial criterion for every company that drives the company to success. If customers are not satisfied with the products or services, a company may lose those dissatisfied customers. Also, it can lead to negative word of mouth. Since the customer is the determining factor of a company's existence, the primary purpose of a company must be to improve customer satisfaction. When a company develops strategies to increase customer satisfaction, some key factors that affect customer satisfaction must be identified. Based on these arguments, the researchers have intended to study the factors that influence customer satisfaction (Anjum, Aftab, Sultan and Ahmed, 2016; Munyanti, Masrom and Akademia Baru, 2018).

By considering the telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka, several problems have been reported in social media and other media regarding customer satisfaction. To determine whether there are problems in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry, an empirical study was carried out for Dialog Axiata PLC, which is one of the leading companies in the telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka (Dialog Axiata PLC, Annual Report, 2018). This company has captured a significant portion of the market share as a market leader with a wide range of products and services, including mobile voice, mobile broadband, internet, devices and TV, and so forth. However, according to Dialog Axiata PLC's management's observations on customer satisfaction through reviews on the company's official social media pages, it has not been favourable as the number of customers has declined over the past few years (Dialog Axiata PLC, 2020). From the perspective of Dialog Axiata PLC's management, negative word of mouth that is spread on social media platforms and mobile

app interruptions have significant reasons for decreasing customer satisfaction (Dialog Axiata PLC, 2020).

According to the results of the empirical study, the following results were presented. And an observation method also has been used. The study was conducted by using 20 customers who were selected from the Dialog Axiata PLC's social media pages and groups. Of those 20 respondents, the researchers asked customers an open-ended question, "Are you satisfied with Dialog Axiata PLC's telecommunication services?", if not, "What are the reasons for the dissatisfaction?". 13 out of 20 customers said that they were not satisfied with the services provided by Dialog Axiata PLC. The graphical illustration of the empirical study is presented below.

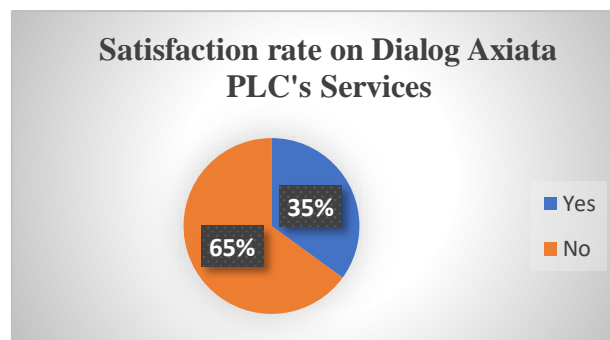


Figure 1: Service

satisfaction

Source: Empirical Study, 2020

Below are some of the issues behind Dialog Axiata PLC's customers' high level of dissatisfaction (Empirical Study, 2020):

- ✓ App performance – The My Dialog app is not performing well
- ✓ Complaints management – Dialog Axiata PLC is not resolving the complaints made by the customers on time. Moreover, some complaints are ignored by the company.
- ✓ Customer communication – The customer must wait a long time when contacting the customer care centre. Sometimes, the phone calls disconnected. Moreover, Dialog does not respond properly to the chatting area in the app and Facebook messenger in some cases.
- ✓ Pricing – Prices for the services is very high compared to other telecommunication service providers in Sri Lanka. Moreover, there are some hidden charges which are deducted from the customers' prepaid balance without informing the customers.
- ✓ Services quality – When considering all those factors stated above, respondents of the empirical study have noted that the service quality of Dialog Axiata PLC is not in a

satisfactory level. Thus, it can be assumed that customer satisfaction can be decreased due to low service quality since previous studies have revealed that there is a direct relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

- ✓ Social media memes – social media gossips and memes make a significant impact on the opinion of the customers on the services provided by Dialog Axiata PLC. Memes and posts posted on Facebook have a negative impact on Dialog Axiata PLC, which can have a negative impact on the company's purchase intention and customer retention.

By considering these above-mentioned issues, the researchers have explored the factors that may influence the Dialog Axiata PLC's customer satisfaction. As a result, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

- i. What are the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the Sri Lankan telecommunication companies?
- ii. What should be the strategies for enhancing the customer satisfaction level of the Sri Lankan Telecommunication companies?

Thus, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to examine the factors affecting customer satisfaction of the Sri Lankan Telecommunication companies.
- to recommend strategies for enhancing the customer satisfaction of Sri Lankan telecommunication companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Through the theories and models, factors affecting customer satisfaction have been identified as follows. The view of most of the researchers is that the service quality can make a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Sridhar, 2001; Minh, Ha, Anh and Matsui, 2015). Based on that, elements of service quality have been identified as factors affecting customer satisfaction. According to the SERVQUAL model, elements of service quality is identified as follows:

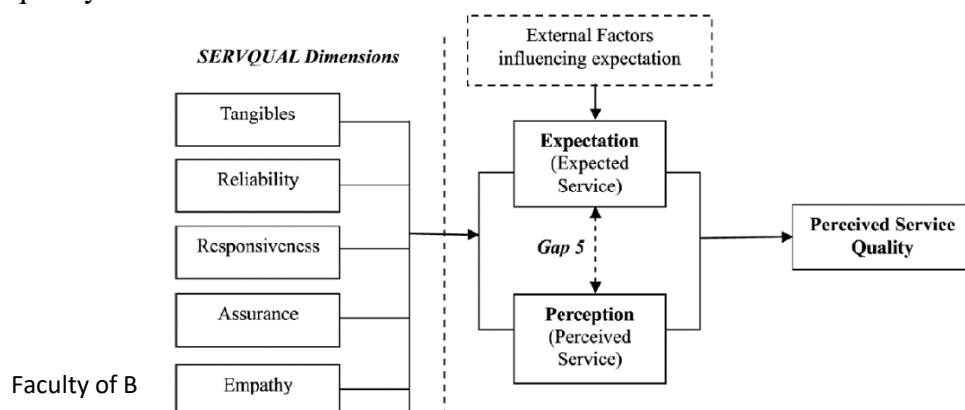


Figure 2: SERVQUAL Dimension

Source: Ghotbabadi, Baharun and Feiz, 2012

According to this SERVQUAL model, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy have been identified as determinants of service quality.

By investigating the models developed by the researchers, especially for the telecommunication sector, “Customer satisfaction model of mobile network providers in Kolkata.” is presented as follows:

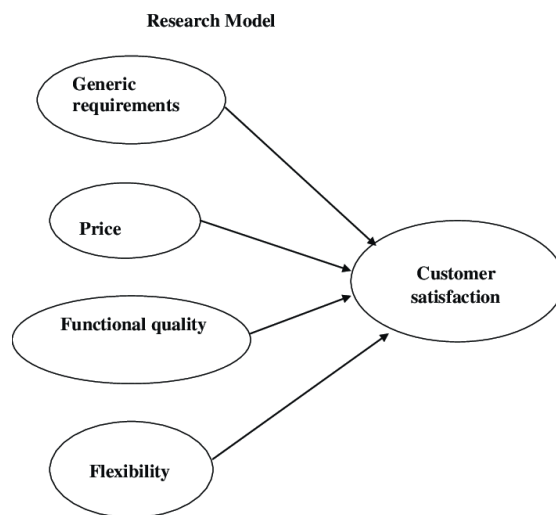


Figure 3: A satisfaction model on customer
Source: Chakraborty and Sengupta, 2014

model on customer
Chakraborty and Sengupta,

According to Chakraborty and Sengupta (2014), genetic requirements, price, functional quality and flexibility can make a significant impact on customer satisfaction.



Figure 4: customer satisfaction
Hosseini and

Dimensions of satisfaction, Nazari, Tabatabaie (2014)

According to the dimensions of customer satisfaction (Nazari et al., 2014), affective responses, perceived value, the fulfilment of critical existing needs and changing needs (innovations) can enhance the satisfaction level of telecommunication customers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research method

Quantitative and qualitative are the two dominant research methods. Since this study was done based on the research articles, this study falls under the qualitative research. The study has analysed altogether ten research articles relevant to this research context to explore the factors affecting customer satisfaction (Mishra and Alok, 2017).

Research approach

Inductive and deductive are the two key main research approaches used by the researchers. Referred to the current study, the deductive approach was used since the research model and all the findings were derived from past studies (Igwenagu, 2016).

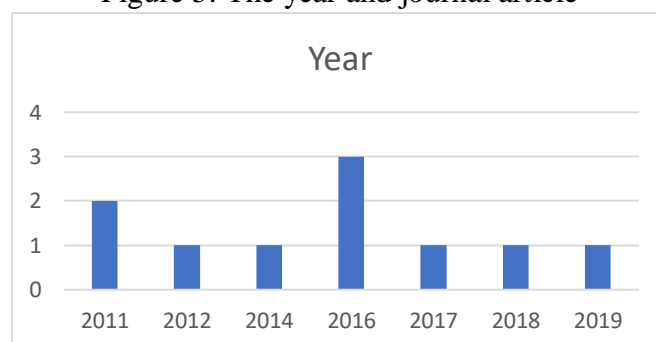
Sample of the study

As a sample of the study, the researchers selected relevant ten research articles and factors that influence customer satisfaction. The articles have been selected through a scientific method as follows.

1. To obtain the most relevant or most up to date data, Journal Articles published, which were published after 2010 have been selected. Therefore, a wide distribution of publications was taken from 2011 to 2019.

The year and journal articles using Microsoft Excel are analysed as follows.

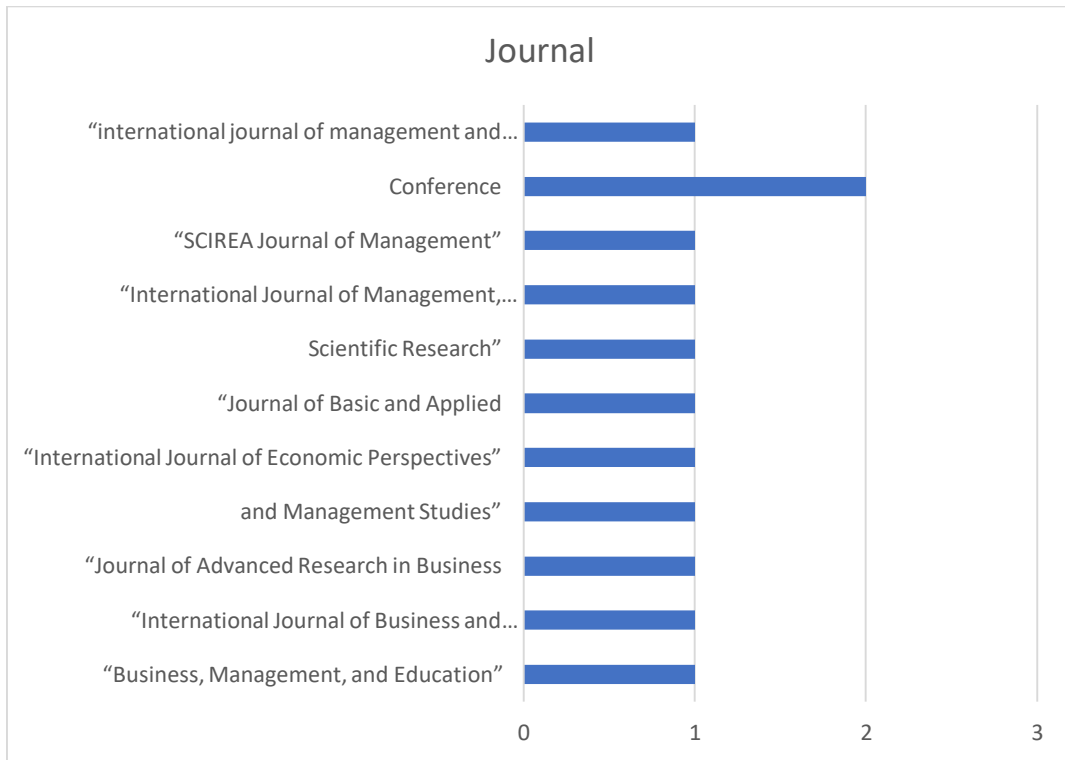
Figure 5: The year and journal article



According to the analysis of the year, the researchers reviewed articles from 2011 to 2019 and published many articles in 2016.

2. To enhance the quality of the results, well-reputed journals and the conference papers were selected to obtain unpublished data. By using the unpublished data, access to future knowledge can be obtained.

Figure 6: Sources of Articles



For the analysis of journals, the researchers selected eight articles from eight different journals and two from conference journals. Based on the literature review, the following factors have been identified as important in determining customer satisfaction. From the researchers’ point of view, these factors may be necessary for Dialog Axiata PLC, when focusing on increasing the level of customer satisfaction.

Method of analysis

To analyse the demographics of the research articles, Microsoft Excel analysis has been used. To analyse the factors affecting customer satisfaction, the summarization method from existing literature has been used (O’Connor and Gibson, 2003).

DATA ANALYSIS

Through a literature matrix table, factors affecting customer satisfaction for companies under the telecommunications sector have been identified.

Table 1: Literature matrix

Author	Year	Journal	Topic	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Findings	Citation
Hasebur	2014	“Business, Management, and Education”	“Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Telecommunication Industry in Bangladesh”	- Innovativeness - Reliability - Competitiveness - Consistency - Signal coverage	Customer satisfaction	There is a significant impact of innovative ness reliability, competitiveness, consistency signal coverage, pricing,	(Hasebur, 2014)

				- Pri Hasebur cing -Value- added services - Contributi on to society		value- added services contributi on to society on customer satisfactio n	
Saha, Islam, and Hoque	20 16	“Internat ional Journal of Business and Manage ment”	“Factors Affecting Customers’ Satisfaction of Mobile Phone Subscribers: An Empirical Study on Mobile Telecommu nication Industry in Bangladesh ”	- Innovativ eness -Signal coverage -Services diversity	Custo mer satisfa ction	Innovativ eness Signal coverage Services diversity affects customer satisfactio n	(Saha, Islam and Hoque, 2016)
Munyan ti, Mason, and Akadem ia Baru	20 18	“Journal of Advance d Researc h in Business	“Customer Satisfaction Factors towards Mobile Network Services”	-Signal coverage -Pricing - Promotion s	Custo mer satisfa ction	Signal coverage Pricing Promotion s affect customer	(Munyan ti et al., 2018)

		and Management Studies”				satisfactio n	
Forogh, Dasanayaka, Al Serhan, Alariki, Houjeir and Recezy	2017	“International Journal of Economic Perspectives”	“Service Quality Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction in Afghanistan’s Mobile Telecommunication Industry”	- Reliability - Consistency -Security -Customer communication	Customer satisfaction	Reliability Consistency Security Customer communication affects customer satisfaction	(Forogh, Dasanayaka, Al Serhan, Alariki, Houjeir and Recezy 2017)
Khan and Afsheen	2012	“Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research”	“Determinants of Customer Satisfaction in the Telecom Industry A Study of Telecom industry Peshawar KPK Pakistan”	-Signal coverage - Promotions -Network quality	Customer satisfaction	Signal coverage Promotions Network quality affects customer satisfaction	(Khan and Afsheen 2012)
Anjum, Aftab, Sultan	2016	“International Journal of	“Factors Affecting Service Quality and	- Reliability - Assurance	Customer satisfaction	Reliability Assurance Tangibility	(Anjum et al., 2016)

and Ahmed		Management, Accounting and Economics”	Customer Satisfaction in the Telecom Industry of Pakistan”	- Tangibility -Empathy - Responsiveness		Empathy Responsiveness affects customer satisfaction	
Ahmadi nejad	2019	“SCIRE A Journal of Management”	“The Impact of Customer Satisfaction on Word of Mouth Marketing (Case Study: Bamilo Online Store)”	-Social media memes	Customer satisfaction	Social media memes affect customer satisfaction	(Ahmadi nejad, 2019)
Alkhafaji	2016	Conference	“User Satisfaction on Mobile Apps: An Analytical Study on Omani Business Environment”	-App performance (low interruptions) Intelligent features of the app	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction can be increased through App performance (low interruptions) and Intelligent features of the app	(Alkhafaji, 2016)

Leelaku lthait and Hongch aru	20 11	“internat ional journal of manage ment and marketin g research ”	“Factors that impact customer Satisfaction: evidence from Thailand Mobile cellular network industry”	- Innovativ eness - Promotion s -Services quality	Custo mer satisfa ction	Innovativ eness Promotion s Services quality affects customer satisfactio n	(Leelakul thanit and Hongcha ru, 2011)
Jibril	20 11	Confere nce	“Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Telecommu nication Industry in Nigeria A Case Study of Etisalat, Nigeria”	-Services quality - Complaint s managem ent	Custo mer satisfa ction	Services quality Complaint s managem ent affects customer satisfactio n	(Jibril, 2011)

Comparison with literature

In the literature review, it was determined that the view of most of the researchers is service quality can make a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Sridhar, 2001; Minhet *al.*, 2015). According to this SERVQUAL model, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy have been identified as determinants of service quality. Moreover, According to Chakraborty and Sengupta (2014), genetic requirements, price, functional quality and flexibility can make a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Finally, literature presents the dimensions of customer satisfaction (Nazari et al., 2014), which includes affective responses, perceived value, fulfilling of essential needs and fulfilling of changing needs (innovations) that can enhance the satisfaction of the customers of telecommunication companies.

Most of the factors identified in the literature review were proved in the data analysis and some unique findings were also identified. Factors which can have a significant impact on the customer satisfaction in the telecommunication industry, which was newly identified from the data analysis such as app performance (low interruptions), complaints management, contribution to society, network quality, services diversity, the security of data, signal coverage and social media memes

Table 2: Identified factors affecting customer satisfaction for companies under the telecommunications sector

Factors	Why do relevant to Dialog Axiata PLC	Relevant literature
App performance (low interruptions)	According to internal reports, Dialog Axiata PLC's mobile application is likely to be interrupted. Therefore, this factor should be considered critically.	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Assurance	The warranty status of Dialog Axiata PLC is satisfactory. Therefore, there is no need to consider the factor as important.	SERVQUAL model (Ghotbabadi et al., 2012)
Complaints management	When you look at Dialog Axiata PLC's Facebook page, you can see that Dialog's	New factor which was derived from data analysis

	complaints management is poor. Therefore, this factor should be considered critically.	
Consistency	The consistency level of the conversation is satisfactory in Dialog Axiata PLC. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	Chakraborty and Sengupta (2014)
Contribution to society	Dialog Axiata PLC involves in several CSR and other social activities. The contribution level of the Dialog Axiata PLC is satisfactory. Thus, there is no need to consider this factor as critical.	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Customer communication	The customer communication level of the Dialog Axiata PLC is satisfactory. Thus, There no need to consider this factor as critical.	SERVQUAL model
Empathy	Sometimes, customers complain of empathy violence in service centres. Therefore, this factor should be considered critically	SERVQUAL model
Innovativeness	The innovation level of the Dialog is satisfactory. Thus, it is not necessary to consider this factor as critical.	(Nazari et al., 2014)
Intelligent features of the app	Dialog Axiata PLC has Artificial Intelligent chat and other features in the App. The intelligent features level of the Dialog is satisfactory. Thus, it is no need to consider the factor as critical.	(Nazari et al., 2014)
Network quality	Dialog Axiata PLC is considered the speediest network in Sri Lanka. Thus, Dialog's network quality level is satisfactory. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Pricing	Dialog Axiata PLC receives complaints about high pricing. Thus, this factor should be considered critically.	Chakraborty and Sengupta (2014)

Promotions	The promotion level of the Dialog is satisfactory. Thus, there is no need to consider this factor as critical.	SERVQUAL model (Ghotbabadi et al., 2012)
Reliability	In terms of customer complaints, this factor should be considered critical.	SERVQUAL model (Ghotbabadi et al., 2012)
Responsiveness	The response level of the conversation is satisfactory. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	SERVQUAL model (Ghotbabadi et al., 2012)
Security	The security level of the conversation is satisfactory. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Services diversity	The diversity level of the conversation is satisfactory. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	Chakraborty and Sengupta (2014)
Services quality	Since reliability and other auxiliary factors were considered, it is recommended to ignore this factor.	services quality can make a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Sridhar, 2001; Minhet <i>al.</i> , 2015)
Signal coverage	Dialog Axiata PLC is considered as the most secure network in Sri Lanka. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Social media memes	As previously stated, there have been many bad Facebook memes against Dialog Axiata PLC. Therefore, this factor should be considered critically	New factor which was derived from data analysis
Tangibility	Dialog Axiata PLC has built its service centres with high-quality assurance. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	SERVQUAL model (Ghotbabadi et al., 2012)

Value-added services	Netflix and many other value-added services are available to customers. Therefore, there is no need to consider this factor as important.	(Nazari et al., 2014)
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Based on these identified factors that determine customer satisfaction, the relevant factors for Dialog Axiata PLC have been identified and incorporated into the conceptual framework as follows.

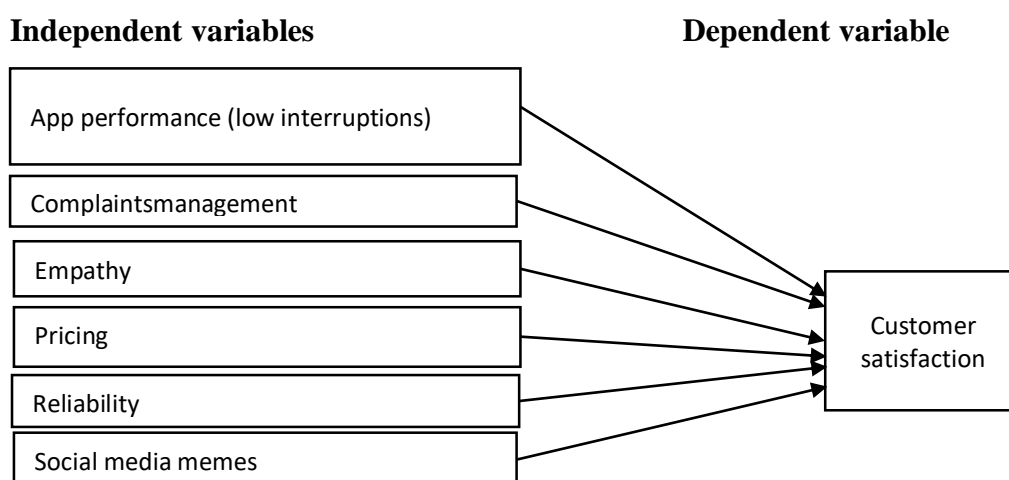


Figure 7: Researchers' Developed Research Model

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

Customer satisfaction is a crucial criterion for every company that drives the company to hit success. This study is based on the Sri Lanka Telecommunication Industry. Dialog Axiata PLC has been selected for the empirical research and it was based on determining the current issues of the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Sector. Over the past few years, the Dialog Axiata PLC's management has seen a slight decline in customer satisfaction with the measurement of customer satisfaction after delivering the service through official social media interaction. The objectives of the study were to explore the factors that influence the customer satisfaction of customers of Dialog Axiata PLC and suggest strategies for improving customer satisfaction. As a sample of the study, the researchers selected ten research articles. Of the ten articles considered, the relevant determining factors were explored.

The conceptual framework was developed based on the appropriate factors to the organizational context such as app performance (low interruptions), complaints management, empathy, pricing, reliability and social media memes. Those factors have been identified as predictors of Dialog Axiata PLC's customers' satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Companies should focus on the six factors identified from the literature review to formulate strategies on customer satisfaction. The bugs of the app should be corrected by conducting an IT audit through an independent IT firm.

Customer Complaints Management should be improved and all receiving complaints should be resolved by respective staff. Besides, service personnel must be trained to understand and respond to customers' emotions and to address them to the management properly. Moreover, it is recommended to consider affordable prices for providing services. Also, to improve reliability, Dialog Axiata PLC should offer the promised services. Last but not least, the wrong social media memes regarding the company created by customers or non-customers should be overcome by creating their own positive featured memes.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

This present study was undertaken by analysing the literature of 10 past types of research related to this context and it was not statistically analysed to find the actual impact of the factors on customer satisfaction. Therefore, future researchers are motivated to analyse these explored factors by collecting primary data and measuring data to obtain definite findings. Furthermore, they can explore other factors that may impact on customer satisfaction.

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