



# A Study on Customer Satisfaction towards Mobile Phone Service Providers: A Case of Chipata of Eastern Province

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates customer satisfaction levels among mobile phone providers, focusing on key factors that influence customer perceptions and experiences. Utilizing a mixed methods approach, was used when collecting quantitative data, through surveys distributed to a diverse demographic of mobile phone users, alongside qualitative insights gathered from in depth interviews and questionnaires. The research identifies critical determinants of satisfaction, including service reliability, customer support, pricing and network coverage.

Findings reveal that while pricing remains a significant factor, the quality of customer service and network reliability is paramount in shaping overall satisfaction. Additionally, brand loyalty is closely linked to positive customer experiences, highlighting the importance of effective communication and responsiveness from providers.

The study concludes with recommendations for mobile phone companies to enhance customer satisfaction through targeted improvement in service delivery and customer engagement strategies. The research contributes to the understanding of consumer behaviour in the telecommunications sector and offers actionable insights for providers aiming to improve their service offerings and retain customers in a competitive market.

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## KEY WORDS

**Customer Satisfaction:** Oliver (1999) defines customer satisfaction as a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment. It is often described in terms of a customer's overall feelings about a product or service.

**Telecommunications:** The transmission of information over significant distances by electronic means. This includes various forms of communication, such as telephone, internet, and broadcasting services.

**Service Providers:** Companies or organizations that provide services to customers, in this case, mobile telecommunications services. Examples include companies that offer mobile phone plans, internet, and related services.

**Demographic Factors:** Attributes that characterize a population or group of people. Common demographic factors include age, gender, income level, education, and occupation, which can influence consumer behaviour and preferences.

**Brand Loyalty:** A consumer's commitment to repurchase or continue using a particular brand. High levels of brand loyalty often lead to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

**Competitive Landscape:** The dynamic environment in which businesses operate, including the strengths and weaknesses of competitors, market trends, and customer preferences. Understanding the competitive landscape is crucial for companies to strategize effectively.

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## 1. Introduction

The First mobile Phone operator was launched in Zambia in 1997 it was called Telecel. Currently there are four major mobile service providers in Zambia namely; MTN, Airtel, Zamtel state owned and Zedmobile.

In recent years, the Telecommunications sector in Zambia has experienced significant growth, driven by advances in technology and an increasing demand for mobile communication services.

Chipata, the capital city of the Eastern Province, has witnessed a surge in mobile phone usage, reflecting broader trends across the country. As a result, understanding customer satisfaction towards mobile phone providers has become essential for both services providers and stakeholders in this rapidly evolving market.

Customer satisfaction is a key indicator of business performance and a crucial determinant of customer loyalty. In a competitive landscape where, multiple providers compete for market share, the ability to meet or exceed customer satisfaction among mobile phone users in Chipata, focussing on service quality, network reliability, pricing, customer support, and overall user experience.

By inspecting these dimensions, the research seeks to provide treasured insights into perceptions and alternatives of purchasers inside the Province. The understanding will no longer best help mobile cellphone carriers tailor their services to fulfill client dreams however also beautify their strategies for customer retention and market enlargement

This test employs a mixed -methods method, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to build up complete facts from a diverse form of mobile smartphone customers. The findings will make contributions to the wider discourse on telecommunication in Zambia and provide actionable hints for enhancing customer pleasure in Chipata and beyond. Ultimately, this studies aspires to function a treasured useful resource for cellular issuer carriers, policy makers, and lecturers inquisitive about the dynamics of patron behaviour inside the telecommunications sector.r.

### **Background of the topic**

The research is aimed toward locating out whether or not the offerings provided by using Mobile telephone providers fulfill the desires of the clients.

The telecommunications organisation in Zambia has gone through great transformation during the last two decades, evolving from a nation-controlled monopoly to a competitive marketplace characterized via manner of a couple of non-public operators. This shift has been fueled thru improvements in cell technology

### **Importance and purpose of the article**

By identifying key elements that affect patron delight among cell telephone clients in Chipata, the have a examine gives precious insights that could help provider vendors enhance their services and deal with regions of difficulty, in the long run important to stepped forward customer critiques.

Informed Decision-Making for Providers: The findings can equip cellular provider organizations with the understanding essential to make information-pushed selections. Understanding client options and ache elements permits organizations to tailor their services and advertising techniques more correctly.

### **Objectives of Research**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the primary offerings supplied by means of Mobile Phone providers to its clients in effort to meet the patron satisfaction goals.
- To have a look at customers' delight or dissatisfaction of cellular phone agencies.
- To compare purchaser pride degrees amongst cellular smartphone customers in Chipata, Eastern Province, Zambia, and to perceive the vital factor factors influencing their pride with mobile carrier companies

### **Scope of the dialogue**

The study seeks to have a examine the important component services that Mobile Phone Companies offers to its clients and whether those services meet consumer desires.

### **Scope of the discussion**

The study seeks to examine the key services that Mobile Phone Companies offers to its customers and whether these services meet customer needs.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The telecommunications employer has swiftly advanced over the last few many years, substantially influencing the way customers join, talk, and interact. Among those technological improvements, cellular phones have emerged as important system in each day life, facilitating no longer best non-public verbal exchange but also access to statistics, leisure, and services. As the market for mobile phones has grown increasingly more aggressive, information purchaser pleasure has turn out to be paramount for telecom vendors aiming to distinguish themselves and domesticate consumer loyalty..

Customer satisfaction is defined as the degree to which customers perceive a product or service to meet their needs and expectations. In an industry marked by high competition and constant innovation, telecom companies must continually assess and enhance their offerings to maintain a satisfied customer base. This literature review aims to explore the existing body of research on customer satisfaction among mobile phone users, focusing on the various factors that influence consumer perceptions.

The following literature review synthesizes key findings from existing research related to customer satisfaction among mobile phone users. It is organized around several core themes that emerge from the literature, providing insights into the factors influencing customer satisfaction in the telecommunications sector.

Customer satisfaction has been long recognized as a vital component of business success.

**Oliver (1999)** emphasizes that satisfied customers tend to exhibit loyalty, leading to higher retention rates and favourable word-of-mouth referrals. Moreover, research by Anderson and Mittal (2000) highlights the direct correlation between customer satisfaction and financial performance, illustrating that companies with higher satisfaction levels often outperform their competitors.

Oliver (1999) conducted significant research on customer satisfaction, particularly emphasizing the importance of understanding the underlying factors that contribute to customer satisfaction and the subsequent implications for businesses. In outlining key aspects of his work, here are several important themes and findings relevant to customer satisfaction according to Oliver (1999):

- Key Elements of Oliver's Customer Satisfaction Model (1999)

**Definition of Customer Satisfaction** Oliver defines customer satisfaction as a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment. It is often described in terms of a customer's overall feelings about a product or service.

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) delineates dimensions of service quality that play critical roles in customer satisfaction, including reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. Empirical studies (Grönroos, 1990) indicate that in telecommunications, reliability of service such as network uptime is often the most significant contributor to overall customer satisfaction.

### Conclusion

This literature evaluation reveals that patron pride among mobile smartphone customers is induced by means of way of a complex interplay of things, together with company nice, technological improvements, customer service, and brand identity. By information the ones impacts, telecommunications businesses can increase strategies to beautify pride and loyalty, ultimately riding employer fulfillment in a competitive marketplace. Future research must keep exploring the dynamic nature of consumer delight, in particular in slight of growing technologies and changing consumer behaviours.

### Theoretical framework

In the context of cellular mobile phone customers inside the telecommunications region, severa key theoretical models and thoughts have emerged to offer an reason for how and why consumer pride is stimulated. The following sections discover outstanding theories and frameworks relevant to purchaser delight, particularly inside the telecommunications corporation..

**Expectancy-Confirmation Theory (ECT)** posits that pride effects from the confirmation or disconfirmation of pre-purchase expectancies. Oliver (1980) on the begin evolved this concept, suggesting that after actual performance exceeds expectancies, clients revel in top notch disconfirmation, major to high satisfaction. Conversely, whilst average performance falls brief of expectancies, negative disconfirmation results, causing dissatisfaction.

In the telecommunications context, customers frequently enter contracts based on unique service expectancies (e.G., network reliability, customer support amazing). If the provider introduced meets or exceeds those expectancies, pleasure will increase. ECT helps provide an explanation for why advertising and marketing and conversation strategies are vital in shaping customer expectations and improving satisfaction.

**Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL)** evolved by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), is a extensively used framework for assessing service fantastic primarily based on the space among patron expectations and perceptions of carrier received. The model identifies 5 dimensions of provider exquisite:

- **Tangibles:** Physical centers, gadget, and appearance of personnel.
- **Reliability:** Ability to perform the promised company dependably and because it ought to be.
- **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help clients and offer set off company.
- **Assurance:** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their capacity to inspire agree with and self belief.
- **Empathy:** Provision of annoying, individualized interest to customers.

Research has proven that service super straight away impacts purchaser delight in telecommunications. Higher perceived company first-rate in those dimensions can result in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, reinforcing the relevance of the SERVQUAL version.

**Disconfirmation Theory**, closely associated with ECT, elaborates on the concept that customer pride is inspired thru the difference among previous expectancies and perceived overall performance. This idea emphasizes that delight isn't honestly a mirrored image of outcomes however as an alternative the result of cognitive evaluations and comparisons.

In the telecommunications company, clients interact with numerous services (e.G., voice calls, data plans) and examine actual overall overall performance with their expectancies. Studies have shown that disconfirmation performs a large position in shaping consumer delight and retention, indicating that control techniques need to attention on aligning service transport with purchaser expectations.

### Model of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

The interplay amongst client delight and loyalty has been examined thru severa models. One influential model is the Customer Satisfaction-Loyalty Pyramid, which posits that satisfaction effects in loyalty thru an intermediary degree of don't forget. This version emphasizes that happy customers are more likely to showcase loyalty behaviors, together with repeat purchases and fine phrase-of-mouth (Dick & Basu, 1994).

In telecommunications, where churn rates can be high, understanding this model is critical for companies aiming to improve retention and foster brand loyalty. By creating positive experiences that enhance satisfaction, telecom providers can build strong customer relationships that translate into long-term loyalty.

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### 3. FINDINGS

This study found that customer satisfaction has a significant and large positive effect on customer loyalty. This finding is supportive of previous studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2011). Evidently, providing subscribers with an experience which results in higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty is likely to be a profitable endeavour for service providers. Therefore, firms seeking high levels of customer loyalty in the Zambian mobile telecommunications industry need to invest in generating customer satisfaction by addressing the appropriate drivers of customer satisfaction. Amongst the five antecedents of customer satisfaction used in this study (i.e., Service quality, Customer satisfaction, Product price, and Network coverage), network coverage was found to be the strongest determinant, confirming that higher levels of network coverage is indeed positively associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction in the Zambian mobile telecommunications industry. This finding is consistent with other studies (e.g., Ibok, 2008). This implies that mobile service providers in Zambia should invest more in their network coverage if they are to have satisfied and loyal customers.

The second strongest determinant of customer satisfaction was customer service, a confirmation that higher levels of higher levels of customer service are positively associated with higher customer satisfaction; consistent with the evidence reported literature (e.g., McDougall and Levesque, 2000). Therefore, in addition to improving network coverage, firms should ensure that their customer service is excellent if customer satisfaction and ultimately customer loyalty are to be achieved.

Service quality was third in terms of its importance as a predictor of customer satisfaction as it was found to be positively associated with customer satisfaction; in line with some previous studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2004).

Therefore, mobile service providers in Zambia should strive for a high quality of service provision if they are to achieve customer satisfaction and consequently customer loyalty. The finding that corporate image is positively associated with customer satisfaction is not incongruent with a number of previous studies (e.g., Lai et al., 2009), hence its importance in the Zambian context. As expected, an inverse relationship between price and customer satisfaction was found, but it was not statistically significant. This finding is consistent with some previous studies (e.g., Martín-Consuegra et al., 2007) which found that price affected customer satisfaction but contradicts other studies such as Adeleke and Aminu (2012) who price not to be a determinant of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Even not statistically significant, the finding on price has operational and strategic importance as pricing still needs to be taken into consideration, together with the other factors, as a possible driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Zambian mobile telecommunications sector.

The findings of this study provide useful guidelines for mobile services providers regarding the important drivers of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. These guidelines will become particularly important as mobile penetration approaches 100% because the only way service providers will be able to grow market share will be by attracting customers from competitors and retaining existing customers. As argued by Kim et al. (2004, p. 146) "the best core marketing strategy for the future is try to retain existing customers by heightening customer loyalty and customer value". Most importantly according to this study, the following should be addressed. Service providers should invest in network

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### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Mobile phone companies to come up with latest technology and state of the art equipment to avert problems of poor and congested network so as to provide quality and connected free network.

Mobile phone companies to work with Government through ZICTA to come up with affordable internet packages to cater for all members of the society.

Mobile phone companies to work with Government through ZICTA to identify areas that require cell phone and internet services to ensure that signal towers are installed.

Mobile phone companies to improve on quality of service in order to satisfy their customers

ZICTA to put up monitoring mechanisms and penalizing erring mobile phone companies, by so doing the companies will be compelled to provide quality and satisfying services.

Companies to get feedback from their customers to fulfil customer needs and wants

The study objective and research question were to investigate the major services offered by Mobile Phone providers to its customers and determine whether customers are satisfied. The study found that customer satisfaction has a significant and large positive effect on the customer loyalty. Evidently, providing subscribers with an experience which results in higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty is likely to be a profitable endeavor for service providers. Therefore, firms seeking high levels of customer loyalty in the Zambian mobile telecommunications industry need to invest in generating customer satisfaction by addressing the appropriate drivers of customer satisfaction. Therefore, mobile service providers in Zambia should strive for a high quality

of service provision if they are to achieve customer satisfaction. The world of mobile is not static, it is always subject to change according to technology thus mobile service providers should move with technology

In contrast of the finding, it may be inferred that, call tariff followed by network is the most influencing attribute for selecting the mobile service provider while network congestion is the major problem faced by the customer of MSP. Furthermore, overall customers are satisfied with their mobile service provider. The present study supports the alternate hypothesis concluding; customer satisfaction has significance association with the demographic factors i.e. age, education and income of the respondent significant level. Furthermore; there is a strong correlation between the service factors particularly network coverage, reliability of service, customer care and value added service while tariff of service has weak correlation with customer satisfaction.

#### Research limitations and direction for future research

This study was limited in at least two some ways. First, the data were gathered from one city only. Future studies could consider using data from other provinces in Zambia. Second, future studies could consider extending their reach to other African countries for comparison. Third, since the variances accounted for in customer satisfaction and customer loyalty were only 54% and 37.4% respectively, there must be other important influencing factors that should be included in future studies. It is suggested that identifying and explaining these influencing factors is an important direction for future research.

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